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**THE ROLE OF ELECTION COMMISSIONS
IN THE TRAINING OF ELECTION OBSERVERS**

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1. In order to improve electoral processes in Georgia, raise voter confidence in elections, ensure uniform understanding of electoral procedures among major election actors, and enhance the Central Election Commission's educational capacity, the Centre of Electoral Systems Development, Reforms and Trainings (the CEC training Centre) was established in January 2010 based on the amendments introduced to the Election Code of Georgia. The goal of the CEC training Centre is to achieve the stated goals by providing skills development and capacity building trainings for various election stakeholders including: election administration, political parties, media, nongovernmental organizations, and voters.

2. The CEC Training Centre offers its training services to observer organizations, among other election stakeholders, during election and non-election period. During a non-election period the CEC Training Centre focuses on providing capacity building training programs, while during the election period it focuses on procedural issues.

3. The Central Election Commission registered 60 local observer organizations to observe the October 27, 2013 Presidential Elections.

4. In September and October of 2013, the CEC Training Centre invited all registered local observer groups to undergo a one day training focused on election procedures. Each observer group was asked to nominate up to five participants to participate in the trainings. 22 observer organizations applied and nominated 112 observers total. However, these organizations were responsible for conducting Training of Trainers (ToT) for their staff and ensuring that the trainees of the CEC's Training Centre would transfer their knowledge received at the CEC trainings to their colleagues.

5. The training module for the observer trainings was developed by the CEC's Training Centre in close cooperation with the CEC. When developing the module, the CEC Training Centre followed the recommendations issued by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) after the October 2012 Parliamentary Elections that clearly indicated the need to provide Election Day procedures trainings for observer organizations¹. In addition, the CEC also collected feedback from local observer groups who carried out a full scale observation mission for the 2012 Parliamentary Elections and were trained by the CEC Training Centre.

6. The final training module included the following topics:

- Role of an observer in the election process,
- Rights and responsibilities of observers,
- Rights and responsibilities of precinct election commissions on the Election Day,
- Voting, vote counting and summarization procedures,
- Complaints/appeals on the Election Day.

7. Training participants were also provided with electronic versions of the training handbook that gives election observers quick access to the training content and enables them to test their knowledge on election matters by taking online tests. Training materials developed by the CEC Training Centre with a financial support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the European Union (EU), along with other election related documents are also uploaded on the CEC Training Centre's official website where it is stored in an electronic library and is available to the public at large. All the training materials prepared by the CEC's Training Centre were translated in ethnic minority languages with a financial support of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES).

8. The CEC training centre is committed to improving its services and thus has introduced and institutionalized a feedback mechanism to allow training participants to comment on the quality

of trainings offered by the CEC Training Centre. The training Centre collects the information from training participants through face-to-face meetings and electronic questionnaires that are distributed among training participants via emails. The feedback is systematized by the Training Centre staff and is incorporated in the development of curriculums for future trainings. Additionally, in order to enhance the CEC's Training Capacity and contribute to better observation mission of local non-governmental organizations, a 14 day Training The Facilitator program (TTF) was conducted for local observer organizations along with political party representatives in the lead up to the October 27th Presidential Elections. TTF is part of Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) trainings and was prepared by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) with the financial support of European Union.

9. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report, Parliamentary Elections 1 October 2012 <http://www.osce.org/odihr/98399>

10. The CEC's Training Centre co-trained with UNDP experts at the training. The training participants that included senior election experts who later led observation missions of leading observer groups were introduced to training techniques and training tools.

11. Under the new leadership, the Central Election Commission plans to conduct a thorough and systematic evaluation of the training programs conducted by the CEC's Training Centre. For this purpose the CEC will meet with the representatives of District Election Commissions and the selected group of observers who participated in these trainings. This assessment will enable the CEC to evaluate the strengths and the weaknesses of the trainings conducted and will help the Election Administration to better prepare for the upcoming Local Government elections. The CEC will incorporate the feedback received when developing training curriculums for the upcoming 2013 Local Government elections.