



# NGOs' statement about the raise of election barrier for the municipal elections

We, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy and Transparency International Georgia welcome the readiness of the ruling coalition in terms of raising an election barrier up to 50% for the upcoming municipal elections.

As it is known, according to the initial decision of the ruling coalition, 40 % vote threshold was set for election of city mayors, while 33 % election barrier was envisaged for local governors that was not supported by us. We, alternatively, asked to impose 50% vote threshold for all elected high officials (Mayors/ local governors). In view of this, we consider that increase of the election barrier up to 50% is a positive amendment, which will reinforce the legitimacy of directly elected high officials.

Though, we should note that our recommendations are more complex and envisage complete improvement of election legislation. We consider that election system remains problematic for elections of the local councils, namely mandates are not accurately reflected by the number of votes cast and one vote equality principles is not ensured. We opine that the government should express readiness for more drastic changes, since raise of the election barrier only, cannot ensure significant development of the system.

With a view to improve the system and create free and fair election environment the state authorities should consider following recommendations:

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



- To introduce multi-mandate election districts for majoritarian representatives in local councils with a view to ensure one vote equality principle;
- To remove the procedure of announcing mistrust to mayors and local governors, since it comes in conflict with direct election principle and diminishes its importance significantly;
- To make possible to nominate independent candidates in municipal elections by the initiative groups. The initiative ensures pluralism, though its absence brings the code in conflict with the international standards and obligations undertaken by Georgia before OSCE.

Notwithstanding the restricted terms, we think the package of amendments should be submitted to the Venice Commission in the nearest future, so that to receive relevant evaluation which we hope, will be considered by the state authorities.

We, Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy and Transparency International Georgia are ready to participate in any discussions around the recommendations and remain hopefully that until adoption of the final document, the government will review its own position on the issue once again.