



The Prime Minister’s initiative “Life goes on” blurs the necessary line between party and state resources

Although the Georgian electoral legislation does not prohibit, save for exceptions, initiation and implementation of social programs in the pre-election period, such initiatives still contain risks of the use of administrative resources. Such initiatives are mainly targeted at broad masses of the population and initiating them before elections is aimed at increasing the level of voters’ satisfaction.

In the pre-election period, the Prime Minister of Georgia, Giorgi Kvirikashvili, talked about a new initiative called “Life goes on”.

According to [news reports](#) of August 8, the Prime Minister stated that “The Georgian

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Dream is working on a new program which is designed specifically for pensioners. The program will be called "Life goes on" and its presentation will probably be held in the nearest days. The Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Finance are working on the program.”

We filed public information requests in the Government of Georgia, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs to learn more details on the issue and to find out whether the program had been provided for in the state budget. The correspondence received from the Ministry of Health (no. 01/66963, date: 02/09/2016) says that the program is now at an early stage of development and, therefore, we will be provided with the requested information after the program has finally been developed and approved, while the Ministry of Finance readdressed us to the Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia (no. 14/83837 date: 05/09/2016) to receive the answer, which increases doubts that by this initiative the authorities are trying to achieve electoral objectives through the use of administrative resources.

For some reason, the authorities always implement such large-scale projects in the pre-election period. Their implementation before elections may not directly contradict concrete norms of the Election Code, though, in its essence, it constitutes the use of budget funds for electoral purposes and creates unequal conditions for political parties.

We believe that the implementation of such programs interferes with ensuring a fair and equal electoral environment for election contestants and creates risks of using administrative resources before elections. These initiatives blur the line between the State and the ruling party before elections, which violates the recommendation envisaged by the OSCE’s [Copenhagen Document](#) according to which it is necessary to have a clear separation between the State and political parties and political parties should not be merged with the State. It is important that the Georgian authorities exercise their goodwill and refrain from implementing such spontaneous budget-funded projects before elections and, thereby, ensure equal conditions for political associations.