



## “The experience gained in the 2016 parliamentary elections and future steps for the 2017 local self-government election”

On July 4 this year, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) held a conference entitled “The experience gained in the 2016 parliamentary elections and future steps for the 2017 local self-government election”. Participants of the conference included stakeholders in electoral processes, including representatives of the Election Administration, the Ministries of Justice and of Internal Affairs, the State Audit Office, election monitoring organizations, and foreign embassies.

The conference participants discussed challenges in legislation and practice in terms of realization of electoral and political rights which were identified in the 2016 parliamentary elections and the ways of resolving them which will promote a

competitive, fair, and inclusive election environment in Georgia.

One of the important components for promoting free and fair election environment is to conduct a thematic analysis of the experience gained at the time of previous elections. This enables us to identify challenges in the electoral legislation and practice and to plan steps for the future. And systemic analysis will help us eliminate the inaccuracies and shortcomings which, in combination, cause the establishment of malpractices. The GYLA presented its findings and recommendations in five key thematic areas:

- Violations in the pre-election period, on Election Day, and in the post-election period (pre-election agitation, use of administrative resources, etc.);
- Activity of agencies involved in elections (the Election Administration, the State Audit Office, the Interagency Commission, etc.);
- Promotion of objective, fair, independent, and effective investigations in cases when measures of criminal and administrative liability were applied against politically active persons;
- Promotion of access to a fair trial and of establishment of uniform practice;
- Promotion of inclusive and competitive election environment for women, persons with disabilities, and ethnic minorities.

During the conference, representatives of each thematic group took part in discussion and presented the key finding and unified views which will enable us to plan future steps for both improving the legislation and eliminating existing malpractices in the aforementioned areas in order to create a fair, competitive, and inclusive election environment.