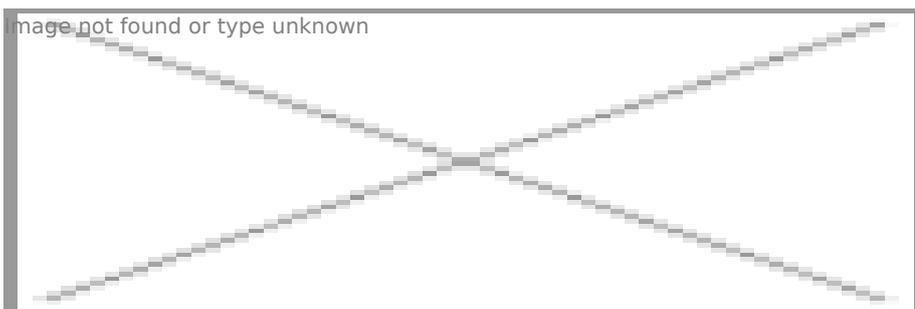


# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



## Statement of NGO's on Contracts with Lobbyists



Ahead of the October 1

Parliamentary elections, campaigning is not only underway within Georgia. In recent months, opposition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili and the Government's National Security

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Council have contracted lobbying firms in the United States – a fact that has not been extensively covered in the Georgian media.

The Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, Transparency International Georgia and the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy believe that the role of international lobbyists and the potential impact of their activities on the electoral campaign should be subject of a broader public debate.

Civil.ge has calculated that this year, the Georgian government is spending at least USD 1.83 million on Washington DC-based lobbyists – the Podesta Group, Orion Strategies LLC, Prime Policy Group, Gephardt Group Government Affairs, LynxDC, and the consultant Gregory A. Maniatis. They are paid to provide strategic advice, communications support, lobbying and „government relation services“ on topics including free trade, Georgia’s transatlantic and Nato integration and „democracy issues“, and to provide „assistance with pre-electoral issues“.

Mr. Ivanishvili appears to currently spend more than USD 300,000 per month on the four lobbying firms Parry and Roman Associates Inc, Patton Boggs LLP, Downey McGarth Group Inc and National Strategies LLC. According to published contracts, responsibilities of the contracted companies include lobbying of members of the U.S. Congress and the Obama administration, media and information tracking, media relations and the implementation of a digital campaign, including the production of videos and documentaries and the creation of a „network of supporters“ in the United States, Europe and within Georgia through social media and the [English language website](#).

In the United States, lobbying contracts with companies representing Ivanishvili and the Georgian government have to be registered with the U.S. Department of Justice under the Foreign Agent Registration Act and are publicly accessible online, <http://www.fara.gov/qs-foreignprincipal.html>. Lobbyists for both, Ivanishvili and the Georgian Government, are also active in Brussels and other European capitals, but details about these activities remain opaque as there are no rigid registration requirements in the European Union.

We believe that both, the Georgian government and Bidzina Ivanishvili should make public all contracts with lobbying companies, provide additional information on the purpose and activities of contracted lobbyists and ensure that these activities do not

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violate the requirements of the Georgia legislation on political party funding. Herewith both, Georgian government and Bidzina Ivanishvili should insure that the lobbyist activities do not affect political campaigns within Georgia directly and excessively.