

## [Increasing Access to Judicial Decisions in Georgia - Presentation of Project Results](#)



On January 24, 2017, the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) presented the results of its project titled Increasing Access to Judicial Decisions in Georgia.

The event was opened by IDFI's Board Chairman Levan Avalishvili and head of the Promoting Rule of Law in Georgia (PROLoG) Program Giorgi Chkheidze, who spoke about the goal of the project and the importance of access to court decisions.

## [Statistics of Cutting Down Trees in Tbilisi Due to Constructions](#)



The number of trees that were cut down in Tbilisi for being damaged had increased at least five times in 2016 compared to previous years, even though the total number of removed trees had remained unchanged.

This finding raises questions about the integrity of the process of examining trees and declaring them to be damaged by the City Hall. In the summer of 2016, civil society organizations already discovered a case of alleged violation in this regard.

In summer 2016, Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) requested Tbilisi City Hall to disclose information on the construction of residential and commercial buildings, permits issued for cutting down trees, income generated from such permits, and unlawfully removed trees.

### [Regulating Secret Surveillance in Georgia \(April-December, 2016\)](#)



Recent surveys show that public perception of surveillance has not changed dramatically in Georgia since 2013. There is still a perception that law enforcement agencies have technical capacity to wiretap and are using this capacity in illegal ways.

Although there has been some progress in terms of investigation of cases of illegal surveillance, the emergence of new cases after the change of government in 2012 has increased doubts on continuing systemic practice of illegal surveillance, lack of willingness from the government to limit its power, and indicates a lack of efficient and comprehensive reform in this area.

### [The Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary Responds to the Council of Europe Committee Decision Rejecting the Strasbourg Judicial Candidates](#)



The Coalition calls on the government to carefully consider the deficiencies of the previous process and make appropriate changes in the process of composing a new commission, deciding the rules of its work and the working process. This will ensure that the process is vigorous and in accordance with the standards set by the Council of Europe.

The Coalition is ready to cooperate with the relevant authorities to overcome the deficiencies and meeting the above objectives.

### [Field Meeting of the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open and Transparent Governance](#)



On January 18, 2017, the field meeting of the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open and Transparent Governance (Council) and the Consultative Group under the Council was held at “Crowne Plaza Hotel”, Borjomi. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues related to parliamentary openness and to plan future steps.

The meeting was attended by the newly elected members of the Council, representatives of civil society and international organizations. Opening remarks were made by Tamar Chugoshvili, the first Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia, Irina Pruidze, the newly appointed Chairperson of the Council, Grigol Bregadze, Democratic Governance Team Leader of United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and Giorgi Kldiashvili, Director of Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), Chairperson of the Consultative Group.

Discussion topics included the project on the amendment of the Parliament’s Rules of Procedure, amendments to the Law on Normative Acts, the project of the Ethics Code of MPs (Members of Parliament) adopted by the previous Parliament, results of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Global Summit in Paris and new perspectives of the Open Parliament Action Plan of Georgia (2017-2018).

## **Coalition Calls on Parliament to Consider President’s Objections in Relation to the “Third Wave” Judicial Reform Bill**

The President of Georgia vetoed the “Third Wave” Judicial Reform bill submitted to him on January 10, 2017. The Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary believes that the objections raised by the President are important for judicial independence and proper implementation of the reform.

On numerous occasions, the Coalition reacted to negative events associated with the Parliamentary considerations of the “Third Wave” legal drafts and has also assessed the bill. The Coalition believes that despite the fact that the bill does not envision reforms in several important areas, it still includes some positive changes. Accordingly, Parliament has to immediately adopt the “Third Wave” bill after having considered the President’s objections.

## **Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Georgia - Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic Aspirations Must be Constitutionally Guaranteed**





The Georgian Parliament has launched discussions on amending the Constitution. Non-governmental organizations, including members of the Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Georgia, have called the Constitutional Commission to include the country's Euro-Atlantic aspirations in the preamble of the Constitution.

We call on the Parliament and the Constitutional Commission to consider our proposal and to make the above change to the Constitution. This will ensure the consistency of Georgia's strategic foreign policy course.

The Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Georgia is a coalition of 23 organizations that aims to support Georgia's integration with Euro-Atlantic structures.

**Parliament Chairperson**  
**Approved the New Composition**  
**of the Permanent Parliamentary**  
**Council on Open and Transparent**  
**Governance**



On January 16, 2017, in accordance with Order #9/3 of the Chairperson of the Parliament of Georgia, a new composition of the

Irakli Kobakhidze, Georgian Dream faction,  
Tamar Chugoshvili, Georgian Dream faction;  
Giorgi Kakhiani, Georgian Dream faction;  
Kakhaber Kuchava, Georgian Dream faction;  
Guguli Magradze, Georgian Dream faction;