

Access to Public Information in Georgia – Presentation of the 2016 Report

Announcement of Georgia's Most and Least Open Public Institutions in 2016

Press Release

September 28, 10:00 am, Hotel Courtyard Marriott, Tbilisi

The Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI) with the financial support of Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF) will hold its 7th annual announcement ceremony of Georgia's most and least open public institutions. The event will also present monitoring results of access to public information in Georgia in 2016, its main tendencies and court practice.

Disclosure of public information in 2010-2016: In the period between 2010 and 2016 IDFI sent 37,582 freedom of information requests to Georgian public institutions, of which 30,729 were answered.

During this period, 2013 was the year with the highest average rate of access to information (90%). In 2014, the percentage of answered requests fell to 82%, rose slightly to 86% in 2015 and decreased again to 85% in 2016. Despite the above fluctuation in the rate of access to information, there is a significant overall improvement compared to 2010.

Access to public information is greatly influenced by the elections of both central and local governments, as well as the attitudes of heads of specific public institutions towards open and accountable governance. Our data shows that access to public information increased for a brief period following each election in 2010-2016, but decreased subsequently to the point where in 2016 a fifth of all freedom of information requests remained unanswered, and some public institutions went from being highly transparent to completely closed.

Disclosure of public information in 2016: In 2016 IDFI sent 7,430 freedom of information requests to 294 public institutions. Out of these, 4,458 requests were fully satisfied, 404 answers were incomplete, 26 requests were refused, and 1,139 were ignored.

Most open public institutions of 2016: IDFI grants a special certificate to all public institutions that provided 100% access to public information. In 2016, there were 55 such public institutions, including:

- *Parliament Administration*
- *Ministry of Environment*
- *Ministry of Prisons*
- *Ministry of Refugees*
- *Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure*

- *Office of the Personal Data Protection Inspector*
- *Ministry of Sport*

Least open public institutions of 2016: The number of public institutions with low access to public information is record high (25) in 2016.

The least open public institution of Georgia in 2016 is the Ministry of Justice together with 12 of its subordinate bodies, which ignored all 346 of our freedom of information requests, and received a score of 0%. In 2013, the Ministry of Justice had provided 95.6% access to public information.

In addition to the Ministry of Justice and its 12 subordinate bodies, 14 other public institutions ignored all of IDFI's freedom of information requests in 2016. These include: *Revenue Service, Bolnisi Municipal Council and Municipal Administrations of Aspindza, Bolnisi, Sagarejo, Kazbegi, Kvareli, Shuakhevi, Tsalka, and Khoni.*

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