

European Local Democracy Week in Kutaisi

On October 15th, within the framework of “European Local Democracy Week” (ELDW), LDA Georgia together with NALAG and Kutaisi local self-government organized meeting between representatives of local authorities (Head of City Council, the Vice-Mayor and City Council members) and non-governmental organizations. The meeting was very interesting, there was an exchange of information, identifying problems which needs more attention and joint attempts to be resolve. Local authorities were officially invited to take part in monthly NGO meetings, which will help them not only to be more informed about different activities and events organised by NGOs, but also to participate and assist this activities. Representatives of local self-government accepted suggestion and agreement to organise such joint meetings was one of the clear result of ELDW in Kutaisi.

On the same day, within the framework of ELDW, school children visited the City administration building. They were able to see the offices of the Governor, the Mayor, and the Head of City Council. They received information about the workings and format of different governmental bodies. They were hosted by Mr. Amiran Khvadagiani, the Head of Kutaisi City Council. In his office he had an interesting discussion with schoolchildren. This lasted for an hour and Mr. Khvadagiani was asked many interesting questions. At the end of the meeting the schoolchildren seemed to be very happy, because they had received much information about activities implemented by local government and the style they work. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Kutaisi City Council for taking part in the European Local Democracy Week.

A few words about “European Local Democracy Week”: It is a new annual European event, where national and local events are organised concurrently by participating local authorities in all member States in order to foster the knowledge of local democracy and promote the idea of democratic participation at a local level.

The two Council of Europe bodies in charge of local and regional democracy issues i.e. the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (Congress) of the Council of Europe and the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) have initiated this project and jointly support its implementation.

The week beginning 15 October has been chosen for holding this event as a tribute to the European Charter of Local Self-Government opened for signature on that date in 1985. A first launch in 2007 would also mark the 50th anniversary of the creation in 1957 of the Conference of the local authorities of the Council of Europe, the first authority in Europe to bring together elected officials of local and regional communities.