

ECMI

ANNUAL REPORT
2007

and Evaluation Report 2007

Excerpts on the Caucasus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ECMI ANNUAL REPORT 2007	3
I. PREFACE	3
II. CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME.....	3
A. Engaging local communities in minority regions.....	3
B. Meskhetian repatriation.....	5
C. International treaties	6
D. Council of National Minorities	7
E. Research and documentation	7
F. Political participation in post-conflict societies.....	8
ECMI Evaluation Report 2007	10
Case Study - Enhancing Minority Governance in Georgia - Government and Civil Society Dialogue: Capacity Building and Empowering Programme in the South Caucasus	10
I. CASE STUDY - ENHANCING MINORITY GOVERNANCE IN GEORGIA - GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE: CAPACITY BUILDING AND EMPOWERING PROGRAMME IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS.....	11
II. GENERAL BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR ECMI INVOLVEMENT	11
III. PHASE I. DEFUSING INTERETHNIC TENSION AND PROMOTING REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN THE JAVAKHETI REGION	12
A. Needs assessment	12
B. Consultation with stakeholders, methodology and project development	12
C. Funding and partnership.....	13
D. Implementation and outputs.....	13
E. Outcomes/evaluation and lessons learnt	14
Link to Academic Outputs.....	14
IV. PHASE II (A) ENHANCING MINORITY GOVERNANCE IN GEORGIA THROUGH ESTABLISHING A REPRESENTATIVE STAKEHOLDER FORUM IN KVEMO KARTLI.....	15
A. Needs assessment	15
B. Consultation with stakeholders, methodology and project development	15
C. Funding and partnership	16
D. Implementation and outputs.....	16
E. Outcomes/evaluation and lessons learnt	17
Link to Academic Outputs.....	17
V. PHASE II (B) ENHANCING STATE CAPACITY ON MINORITY ISSUES	17
A. Needs assessment	17
B. Consultation with stakeholders, methodology and project development	17
C. Funding and partnership	19
D. Implementation and outputs.....	19
E. Outcomes/evaluation and lessons learnt	20

ECMI ANNUAL REPORT 2007

I. Preface

The main focus in ECMI's action-oriented work remains on Georgia and Kosovo. In both regions, the Centre has established itself as the key player in the area of majority minority relations, working both with civil society actors and the government. In Georgia, the centre's office, led by Mr. Tom Trier, has continued its work in Samtskhe Javakheti and in the Tsalka region. At the same time, the Centre has continued to offer legal and institutional support to the central government and parliament, acting in coordination with the Council of Europe.

II. Conflict Transformation Programme

The Programme addressed conflict transformation out of two main perspectives — conflict prevention in Georgia; constructive conflict transformation in Kosovo and conflict transformation through delineation of power-sharing in Moldova.

Georgia in 2007 - two steps forward, one step back (www.ecmigeorgia.org) In 2007, ECMI continued the implementation of the Centre's complex programme in Georgia begun in 2003, partly within the framework of the interventions of a larger programme implemented by the Danish Foreign Ministry — Denmark's Caucasus Programme 2005-2007 — and partly based on funding provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. By the end of the year, Denmark's Caucasus Programme came to an end. However, the ECMI interventions in Georgia so far will be continued in 2008. The regional activities, focused mostly on the two southern regions of Georgia with large concentrations of persons belonging to national minorities — the predominantly Armenian region of Javakheti and the multi-ethnic region of Kvemo Kartli (Azeris, Armenians, Greeks and Georgian) — will be extended based on Norwegian support, while the interventions aimed at developing government capacities and advance Georgia's accession to international treaties on minority issues will continue under a new Danish funded partnership with the Council of Europe in the period of 2008-2009, in which ECMI will act as an implementing partner to the Council of Europe.

A. Engaging local communities in minority regions

ECMI has continued support to the development of inter-ethnic civil society networks, the Javakheti Citizens' Forum (JCF, established in 2004) and the Tsalka Citizens Forum (TCF, established in 2005). Both forums are associations of NGOs and individuals in Georgian minority regions which aim at working towards regional integration and function as platforms for dialogue with the central government on issues of regional concern.

Through working group meetings, roundtables and conferences the stakeholder networks engage in consultation with the government, and simultaneously assistance is provided through resource centres in Javakheti and Tsalka to build the capacity of regional NGOs to perform as regional civil society partners for the government and international organizations which support development and other activities in the region.

In 2007, significant progress has been made in enhancing the political dialogue between central government actors and regional stakeholders through JCF and TCF. Activities have been carried out to foster new links between regional stakeholders and governmental bodies. As Georgia's regions are approaching a new stage of land-privatization, intense consultations have taken place between regional civil society representatives and officials from local authorities and central government institutions, and information campaigns on privatization rights have been carried out in local minority communities. The Georgian Ministry of Education and Science have been

responsive to the recommendations of the civil society structures, and close liaison has taken place between the parties throughout the year.

Currently, a series of reforms is being implemented in the educational sphere to enhance knowledge of the state language in regions predominantly inhabited by minorities, where only small proportions of the population master the Georgian language. Here, one issue of particular concern to minorities is that a new law on elementary education passed in 2005 provides for a transition over five years to replacing minority language with Georgian in subjects such as literature, history and geography. While regional minority representatives agree to the need for increased measures to teach Georgian, this has also caused legitimate concerns that teaching of Georgian will be strengthened at the expense of minority languages. Through regional recommendations and numerous consultative meetings between the Javakheti and Tsalka Citizens' Forums and the ministry, the issue has been raised and discussed in several rounds over the past years. The ministry until recently took a rather uncompromising position on the issue, but in October it announced that a committee now is considering the recommendations of the regional stakeholders, and an amendment to the law is currently underway to soften the legal provisions for language teaching in minority regions. It seems that a breakthrough finally is on its way on this issue after three years of dialogue and lobbying, as the ministry shows increasing willingness to compromise.

As new language requirements for public school directors were introduced at the national level, school directors throughout Georgia were required to pass a general qualification test in January 2007. Ethnic non-Georgian candidates largely failed to pass the exams, especially due to a component of the exam which requires knowledge of Georgian language. Hence, only 11 school directors and other candidates out of a total of 175 candidates in Javakheti managed to pass the test, while 8 of them being ethnic Georgians.

In Kvemo Kartli, out of 659 candidates, 273 persons managed to pass the exam, but only 8 of them were ethnic Azeris. In spring 2007, a second round of exams was conducted for schools, where no candidates managed to pass the exams. However, if the language requirements are upheld, it is expected that very few of the candidates in Javakheti, where 95% of the population is Armenian, will be able to qualify. Through JCF and TCF efforts have been made to consult the government about the problematic aspects of this policy, which may lead to the ousting of the vast majority of the ethnic non-Georgian school directors, and to provide constructive suggestions to avoid ethnic exclusion. At the same time, ECMI has supported activities to conduct Georgian language training for 90 Armenian school directors in Javakheti.

2007 was also the year in which the Russian army finally withdrew from Georgia after years of delay. In June, the last military column departed from the closing 62nd Russian base in the town of Akhalkalaki in the overwhelmingly Armenian populated region of Javakheti, and in November the last contingent of Russian soldiers left the closed military base in Batumi on the Black Sea coast. The closure of the Akhalkalaki base expectedly did have a strong negative effect on the economy of the local population, as many local Armenians were employed at the base and in other ways benefited economically from the Russian presence. Indeed, there is an urgent need to develop alternative means of employment in the region. However, the closure of the base did not lead to political tension in the region, and in this context it can be assumed that the functioning of mechanisms for political dialogue between the region and the centre has helped to further political integration and defuse regional tension.

B. Meskhetian repatriation

One of the major events on minority related issues this year was the passing by the Parliament of Georgia of a law on repatriation. The law, officially titled the “Law of Georgia on Repatriation of Persons Forcefully Sent into Exile from the Georgian SSR by the Former USSR in the 40’s of the 20th Century”, was passed on 11 July with 117 votes in favor and 19 against within a month after being first presented for hearing in Parliament. The passing of the law was seen by many as a breakthrough both in bringing historical justice to a people — the Meskhetian Turks — who were collectively deported by the Stalin regime during World War II, and in fulfilling one of Georgia’s remaining commitments to the Council of Europe.

However, the initial euphoria among Meskhetian Turks was overshadowed by darker perspectives after a closer examination of the law revealed several deficiencies in the adopted version of the law, causing concern among Meskhetian Turks and international organizations alike that the law in reality does not provide guarantees for the right to return, and fear that the law may have been passed with a view solely to satisfy demands of the international community without being followed by real intentions by the Georgian Government of undertaking a serious process of repatriation.

A main problem is that the provisions of the law are very vague, leaving a very large margin of discretion to government officials in processing applications for repatriation and in interpreting the principles for the return process. While according to the law, applications for repatriation are to be submitted throughout 2008, the actual processing of application will begin only in 2009. This implies that potential repatriates are entitled to submit their applications only during a one year period, and some observers have voiced concern that this period will be insufficient to ensure that all eligible applicants can be properly informed about their entitlements. Another issue of apprehension is that applicants will have to provide documentation that they or their descendants were forcefully exiled. This requirement may create a major obstacle for many deportees and their descendants. The law does not specify which types of documentation are necessary to satisfy this demand, and it is expected that many Meskhetian Turks will face severe difficulties in providing such documentation. No specific documents were issued upon deportation, although old identity documents in some cases may help to establish that relatives were subjected to the deportation. However, as many Meskhetian Turks originally were deported to the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union, and later, in 1989, again were displaced due to ethnic unrest in Uzbekistan, dozens of thousands among the potential repatriates may have lost documentation of this kind. Moreover, the law does not define when and under which circumstances repatriates will be entitled to obtain Georgian citizenship, while they are to renounce their current citizenship upon repatriation. The Parliament of Georgia has postponed the decision on the conditions and timelines for issuance of citizenship for repatriates to 2010.

ECMI has been among the very few international organizations that has taken an interest in the Meskhetian Turk issue from early on. As early as in 2003, ECMI embarked on a large scale research project aimed at studying integration and migration patterns among Meskhetians in the nine countries where they are currently settled in larger numbers: ECMI Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and the USA (ECMI Working Paper #21). The research, which was generously funded by the Volkswagen Foundation, was conducted by 37 ethnographers and other social scientists based on field work in Meskhetian settlements and resulted in the past year in the publication of an authoritative 663 page volume on the subject: Tom Trier & Andrei Khanzhin: *The Meskhetian Turks at a Crossroads, Integration, Repatriation or Resettlement?* LIT Verlag, Berlin, 2007. A Russian edition of the volume was simultaneously published by Aleteiya Publishing House in St. Petersburg, Russia.

The preliminary results of the research project has in the past few years helped to inform international and Georgian stakeholders in preparation of the repatriation and ECMI has organized numerous conferences, seminars and consultations on the subject. With the publishing of the book volume in the second half of 2007, relevant stakeholders in Georgia and abroad have acquired an instrument of knowledge on the contemporary situation of the Meskhetian Turks, which hopefully can help to prepare policy-makers and planners in the implementation of the law on repatriation.

Upon adoption of the law on repatriation, the Council of Europe and ECMI in October held a working meeting for Georgian government officials, members of parliament and civil society representatives with the participation also of the OSCE, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, the International Organization for Migration and the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. The aim of the meeting was to review the legal provisions of the law and to discuss how the law can translate into implementation practice.

During the working meeting, a number of critical issues were raised and discussed. The establishment of an inter-agency working group was among the recommendations of international organizations to elaborate a 'Manual of Application Procedures' and also in the longer term to develop and implement a strategy for repatriation and integration of returnees. An *ad hoc* working group consisting of representatives of the participating international organizations was established at the October meeting, which subsequently elaborated a suggestion for a government working plan as well as a list of problem issues related to the legal provisions of the law vis-a-vis the implementation practice.

Unfortunately, the political turmoil that broke out in Georgia in November, in which demonstrations organized by the opposition resulted in a confrontation with the government, and an ensuing government crack-down on the demonstrators on 7 November followed by the introduction of a state of emergency and a closure of opposition radio and TV stations, brought the consultation process on repatriation to a temporary standstill. It is expected, however, that the consultative process can be resumed early in 2008, subsequent to the presidential election on 5 January. It is an objective in ECMI's interventions in 2008 to assist in the advancement of implementation principles for the law on repatriation as part of the ECMI-component of the Council of Europe successor programme 2008-2009.

C. International treaties

It is an integrated part of ECMI's interventions in Georgia to provide support to the government in fulfilling its obligations to the Council of Europe on areas related to national minorities. Apart from the issue of Meskhetian repatriation, ECMI also work towards the implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), which was ratified in December 2005. While Georgia's first State report to the Advisory Council on the FCNM was submitted in July 2007, Georgia now awaits a mission of experts from the Advisory Committee envisaged to take place in the first part of 2008. Hence, activities in the area of supporting the creation of a monitoring body are planned subsequent to the visit of the Council of Europe delegation.

Efforts were made in the past year by the Council of Europe to advance the signing and ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and ECMI supported this work by assessing the specific conditions in Georgia for accession to this treaty; however the political turmoil in November and the announcement of the snap presidential election and the possibility of early parliamentary elections in spring 2008 had a postponing effect on the furthering of this commitment, given the controversial character of the ECRML as understood in Georgia. Georgian decision-makers are wary of the provisions of the charter, partly out of concerns that the application of the ECRML in Georgia may imply a special status

to regional languages such as Mingrelian and Svan, where many fear that the extension of enhanced language rights may be seen as an encouragement to the development of particularistic ethnic identities among the speakers of these languages. There are also concerns that Armenians and Azeris may be given wider linguistic rights under the charter, and many lawmakers feel that this may be detrimental to government efforts to current processes of Georgian language learning in minority regions. However, it is expected that Georgia eventually will enter into serious considerations of the Language Charter as well as a Law on National Minorities – the two commitments being the final before the country has completed the fulfillment of her obligations to the Council of Europe, and ECMI’s assessments and documentation in this area seek to allay some of the concerns and provide a knowledge base that can inform decision-makers on the implications of the ECRML and a law on minorities. The fact that fulfillment of Council of Europe obligations are closely linked to the process of accession to NATO, to which Georgia is a keen candidate, provides a strong motivation to complete the obligations.

D. Council of National Minorities

In the past year, ECMI continued its close collaboration with the Public Defender of Georgia to facilitate and support the work of the Council of National Minorities, instituted with ECMI support in December 2005. The Council of National Minorities (CNM) is rapidly solidifying its place as a major actor in the debate on integration and education reform affecting national minorities. With each month, CNM has become increasingly institutionalized, garnering the participation of more and more regional representatives and following the work plan designed to expedite and magnify the Council’s presence and effect on government policies. Accordingly, its activities have been extremely well-received by relevant government officials, who have regularly commented on the usefulness of such a forum. Much emphasis has been put on enhancing the links with the government structures in the past year and this has only served to increase the popularity of the CNM as a viable mechanism to actually influence policy-making processes. In the first part of the year, CNM spent significant efforts through the proceedings of four thematic working groups (language and education, legal issues, media and regional issues) to draft a comprehensive set of recommendations based on the provisions of the recently ratified Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The set of recommendations were presented at a large event in May, gathering almost 300 representatives of government, parliament, civil society and the mass media. The government’s reception of the recommendations was generally positive, and government representatives and parliament members committed to strengthen the process of consultation with CNM. In the second part of the year, the CNM continued to refine selected recommendations and consult with the government on their implementation. Over the final months of the year, working groups expanded upon recommendations in the thematic spheres, to establish a comprehensive set of policy priorities for further discussions with state officials in the coming year. Targeted work in these areas has enabled the CNM to begin taking more concrete and detailed policy stances on important issues.

E. Research and documentation

In the academic field, ECMI has continued efforts to conduct research and provide documentation on issues relevant for policy makers related to national minorities in Georgia.

As follow-on to research on the obstacles for regional integration of the isolated Samtskhe-Javakheti region of Georgia with its large Armenian population conducted in 2004, ECMI published a working paper on the past two years’ developments in the region, documenting the progress made in enhancing dialogue between the regional constituency and the Government. The findings of this study are published in English and Russian as ECMI Working Paper no. 28:

Hedvig Lohm: Javakheti After the ‘Rose revolution. Progress and regress in pursuit of National Unity in Georgia, April 2007.

A paper on eco-migration: Tom Trier & Medea Turashvili: “Resettlement of Ecologically Displaced Persons Solution of a Problem or Creation of a New?”, (ECMI Monograph no. 6, August 2007), was published in English and Georgian and has been widely disseminated among relevant stakeholders within government and civil society. The monograph addresses for the first time in a systematic and comprehensive way the problem of ecological displacement in Georgia’s mountain regions, and how unplanned migration causes tension, as migrants move into minority inhabited regions.

Together with the Public Defender’s office, ECMI plans to organize a roundtable on this issue in the first part of 2008 with the aim to generate policy action in this field. Research on another working paper on the Romani minority in Georgia, responding to encouragement to address the plight of this particularly vulnerable and marginalized minority by the European Committee against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) was completed in December, and is now to be translated, published, and followed up upon through a series of awareness raising initiatives in 2008. In addition, research on the state policies in the educational sphere with regard to national minorities was completed in December, and a report is to be translated, edited and published in the beginning of 2008.

In continuation of research begun in 2006, ECMI — in partnership with researchers from the Georgian Centre for International Policy Studies (IPS) — carried out research on the historical and current situation of all the main ethnic groups in Georgia, including those living in the break-away territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The study covers 23 encyclopedic entries on the individual groups as well as a comprehensive historical introduction to ethno-politics, minority relations and governance on minorities in Georgia. This research will be published in 2008 in the volume: Tom Trier & Gia Tarkhan-Mouravi: Georgia – an Ethno-Political Handbook, which will appear in English and a Georgian version. Upon completion, ECMI believes that this handbook will be an invaluable resource for actors dealing with minorities in Georgia and a very useful source of information on minority and ethno-political issues.

Georgia continued to move forward in 2007 with regard to the fulfillment of international obligations on national minorities and related issues. However, it is a matter of concern that the adopted Law on Repatriation does not contain concise provisions for the return of deported persons, and only the ensuing implementation practice will show to what extent government planners’ real intentions with regard to repatriation of deported Meskhetian Turks have.

However, the fact that Georgia remains committed to enhance her integration into Euro-Atlantic structures gives course for optimism. The obligations with regards to repatriation of Meskhetian Turks are only partially fulfilled with the passing of the law, and in the coming years the Council of Europe and NATO will closely monitor the process of implementation. It is also the prospects of NATO accession that will be the determining factor for the signing and ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the adoption of the Law on Minorities. At the same time, however, there is a need to support the Georgian government with the building of effective institutions that can enhance good governance for national minorities and mechanisms for on-going consultation between the authorities and minority representatives. It is this fields that will be the focus of ECMI interventions in Georgia in the coming years.

F. Political participation in post-conflict societies

The research methods used by ECMI for investigating different aspects of minority inclusion in party politics in one national context also inform research and advisory work on minority

political participation in other contexts. Research on parties' policy positions on minority issues has also been started by the ECMI regional office in Georgia, which is another post-Soviet country with a long experience of ethno-territorial co Nine NUTS III regions (as defined by EUROSTAT's Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics III classification) have been selected: Region North, Northern Ireland (United Kingdom); Covasna County (Romania); Skopje (FYR Macedonia); Rodopi district, Western Thrace (Greece); Harju County (Tallin, Estonia); South Tyrol/Provincia Autonoma Bolzano (Italy); Gagauzia (Moldova); North Banat, Vojvodina (Serbia); and Samtskhe-Javakheti (Georgia). The regions (from which two of them, Skopje and Tallin, are actually capital cities) — comprised of a significant and compact presence of minority population — have been selected to ensure a “most different case study design” in terms of the widest possible variation of potential explanatory factors. The table that follows gives an overview of the regions and the minorities under scrutiny.

ECMI Evaluation Report 2007

(Annex A)

**Case Study - Enhancing Minority Governance in Georgia - Government and Civil Society
Dialogue: Capacity Building and Empowering Programme in the South Caucasus**

I. Case Study - Enhancing Minority Governance in Georgia - Government and Civil Society Dialogue: Capacity Building and Empowering Programme in the South Caucasus

ECMI's Georgia project is an example of a programme that began towards the end of the first five-year period (2004) following the launch of the ECMI strategy document of 2000 and exemplifies the kind of multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary approach that ECMI has been employing. The Georgia programme is ECMI's second major action-oriented project and its implementation can be divided into two key phases – 1) capacity building of minority groups in Javakheti and 2) capacity building of the government to enter a meaningful dialogue on the tense issues of minority majority relations in post-Shevardnadze Georgia.

The first phase focused primarily on one region, the Javakheti region in southern Georgia, and during this phase the project attempted to build a network of stakeholders first within the region itself and then extending from the region to the central authorities in Tbilisi. The second phase then sought to consolidate ECMI's co-operation with the central authorities by working intensively with government structures in order to assist the government in ensuring that international standards on minorities are observed. Concurrently with this second phase ECMI sought to 'export' its capacity-building project in Javakheti to another region (Kvemo Kartli), using the lessons learnt in the first region. Like the Kosovo project, the Georgia project serves as an example of ECMI's long-term engagement and its aim is to build a relationship over the medium to long term not only between stakeholders in Georgia and ECMI but also between stakeholders at local and national level, as well as between all stakeholders and other international agencies. The evolution of this project has been very finely calibrated in response to lessons learnt at all stages of the project.

After a brief outline of the context in which the project was launched at its early stages, the following analysis will examine each of the two phases in the evolution of ECMI's activities in Georgia. As the second phase (in chronological terms) was marked by a two-pronged approach with the extension of ECMI's regional networking project from Javakheti to another region (Kvemo Kartli), on the one hand, and greater engagement with the central authorities, on the other, this second phase is divided into (a) and (b) components.

II. General Background and Need for ECMI Involvement

In early 2004, when ECMI first began implementing its projects in Georgia, the country had just embarked upon a period of rapid transformation. The new administration led by President Mikheil Saakashvili that had come to power following the Rose Revolution of November 2003 pledged to take Georgia in a new direction by re-establishing the core functions of the Georgian state and integrating further into European and Euro-Atlantic structures. With regard to this latter direction, it was expected that the Georgian Parliament would finally ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), would sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and would enact a law allowing the return of the Meskhetian Turks, deported by Stalin in 1944. Although the FCNM had been signed by the Georgian government in 2000, it remained little more than a statement of intent.

In 2004, national minorities in Georgia remained poorly integrated into the political and civic life of the country. In particular, the two largest minorities, the Armenians and the Azeris were geographically concentrated in two provinces of Georgia, respectively Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli. The geographical concentration of minorities in these regions meant that there were many monolingual minority communities that had no opportunity of learning the Georgian language, which, according to the 1995 Constitution, was the only state language. This situation was exacerbated by a corrupt and dysfunctional state apparatus that had neglected almost all

rural regions, including those in which minorities were concentrated, by failing to provide even the most basic public goods. The result was that most members of Georgia's minorities lived in communities that were mired in poverty and in which basic infrastructural provisions (such as roads, schools and hospitals) were absent or degraded. Most had little or no contact with the Georgian state and eked out a subsistence living from the crops they grew, the animals they raised, or small-scale consumer articles they would sell. In addition, the language barrier made it impossible for them to interact with state structures. Under such circumstances, the notion of integration with the Georgian state was, for them, either absurd or meaningless.

The immediate aftermath of the Rose Revolution provided the ideal environment for ECMI action. The new government pledged to root out corruption and thereby restore the basic functions of the state. For the first time since Georgia's independence it was the new government's aim to fully integrate Georgia's national minorities into Georgian public life through rebuilding the infrastructure that would reconnect minority regions geographically with the rest of the country and through ensuring that members of minorities learnt the Georgian language. Given that such moves towards integration are sometimes resisted by minority populations, who fear cultural and linguistic assimilation, and given ECMI's experience as a facilitator of dialogue between majority and minority communities and as neutral broker in conflict resolution, ECMI's intervention could not have been more apposite. ECMI's expertise was needed above all to establish networks of stakeholders in the minority regions that could voice their demands and grievances and communicate them to the Georgian government in a peaceful manner, as well as to assist the Georgian government in fulfilling its international obligations.

III. Phase I. Defusing Interethnic Tension and Promoting Regional Integration in the Javakheti Region

A. Needs assessment

The point of entry for ECMI was the Javakheti region of Georgia, which consists of the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts of Samtskhe-Javakheti province. More than 90% of the population of Javakheti region is Armenian and most live in monoethnic communities. Due to the high altitude and geographical isolation of the region, the infrastructure is particularly degraded and economic problems are severe. In February-March 2004, contact was established with the local authorities in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts and other local stakeholders, and a preliminary needs assessment of socio-political and economic obstacles for the integration of Javakheti was carried out. This needs assessment was later published as an ECMI working paper (see below).

B. Consultation with stakeholders, methodology and project development

At the initial stage, the project activities were focused on fostering a dialogue *within* the Javakheti region on matters that were of concern to local residents. Following the completion of the needs assessment, ECMI convened a preparatory meeting in the town of Akhalkalaki on April 23, 2004 to which some 20 civil sector and local government key-stakeholders from the region were invited. The meeting identified key areas of concern to the local community. The lack of channels for appropriate communication between Tbilisi and the region was identified as a major obstacle for a constructive dialogue to address regional needs. These preliminary discussions served as a platform for the subsequent establishment of a yet informal but rather broadly representative network of local actors, the "Javakheti Citizens Forum" (JCF), which was established in Akhalkalaki on September 22, 2004. This event took the format of a conference, attended by some 80 representatives of civil society structures, local and central government agencies, policy institutes and Georgian mass media. The forum facilitated discussions on the need for improved dialogue between the local and central actors to address the regional community's concerns. To support and maintain such a dialogue two JCF working groups

(WGs) were established: a) a Working Group on Language, Culture and Education and b) a Working Group on Economic Development and Integration.

C. Funding and partnership

As is the case with all of ECMI's projects, this project was not developed in response to the criteria of funding organisations; instead, the priorities of the project were driven by the needs on the ground. ECMI was most fortunate to receive support in terms of funding from the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FRESTA) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to implement the project. Since 2006, the Georgia programme has been consolidated into Denmark's Caucasus Programme 2006-2007.

As well as international partners, ECMI worked closely with Georgian partners at both national and local level. These included the local authorities of the districts of Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda, the office of the authorised representative to the province of Samtskhe-Javakheti, a wide range of actors from the local civil society (mainly NGOs), the office of the State Minister for Conflict Resolution Issues in Tbilisi, the Ministry of Education in Tbilisi and other state bodies.

D. Implementation and outputs

Over the early phase of its implementation, the project helped regional actors in elaborating a more consolidated approach towards the issues of integration and for addressing the current socio-economic recession. At the same time it clearly demonstrated the need for establishing mechanisms for a constant and constructive dialogue, as well as direct and effective information flow between the local and national level stakeholders to eliminate the threat of further isolation and aggravated ethno-political tension in the region.

From the time they were established, the newly established JCF Working groups regularly met during October and November 2004 to discuss, prioritize and prepare recommendations on problematic regional issues in their respective thematic fields. At the same time a series of conferences, prepared jointly by ECMI and JCF, in which central government representatives were invited, provided a forum for the JCF to communicate the opinions of the local Armenian community and to engage in an open discussion with the authorities on issues such as language, education and regional socio-economic problems.

To enhance and formalize the legal and organizational status of the JCF, as well as to prepare the ground for its sustainable functioning after completion of the project, ECMI initiated a process of formal institutionalization of the network in mid 2005. On June 10, the 4th regional Conference in Ninotsminda elected a Consultative Group of 21 activists, which subsequently established a working group of 6-10 activists with a legal background, to start drafting of the JCF statutes and an inaugural declaration of the future association. The process of formalisation of the JCF was made complete by the JCF Inaugural Conference, which was convened on August 23 2005 under the auspices of ECMI. This Conference brought together around 200 representatives of the civil society sector in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda rayons as well as community leaders, local public/governmental officials, other stakeholders and the media. The conference adopted the JCF organizational Statute and Inaugural Declaration and elected a 40-member Organizational Council to form the governing and executive structures of the JCF. On August 24, the Organizational Committee convened to elect the JCF Board. To ensure that the JCF management from the outset would not be controlled by the radical segments of civil society in Javakheti, which would deter the central authorities from continuing the dialogue process, and in compliance with the JCF Statutes, ECMI reserved the right to appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair of the JCF Board. However, the Board by consensus nominated two candidates who were subsequently approved and appointed respectively as Chairman and Deputy Chairman by ECMI

on September 13, 2005. On October 24, 2005, the JCF was officially registered as an NGO with the Ministry of Justice.

E. Outcomes/evaluation and lessons learnt

Given the current status of the decentralization process in Georgia, JCF, as a structure for maintaining sustainable policy consultations between stakeholders in minority regions and the central governmental institutions, has set a successful example that can be replicated in other minority populated areas in Georgia and even in monoethnic communities across the country. The replication of the centre-region dialogue model can become a useful tool in addressing acute regional issues and promoting the country's integration until Georgia achieves an enhanced level of decentralization and relevant centralized tasks are effectively devolved down to the regional and community levels. It was for this reason that ECMI attempted to replicate this model with the establishment of a Tsalka Citizens' Forum in 2006 (see below).

However, despite the fact that all network participants formally accepted the JCF organizational statutes and programmatic objectives, many members joined the association in anticipation of donor resources rather than out of commitment to the JCF organizational goals. Some participants, including members of the Board, became disillusioned with the process when it became clear that such resources would not be available. This phenomenon threatened the future sustainability of the network after ECMI's withdrawal. In mid-2006, it was therefore decided that steps needed to be taken in order to make the Forum a more efficient and robust organization. In July, members of the Board agreed to introduce changes to organizational structure and management of the JCF. It was decided to reduce the number of board members and to invite prominent civil society leaders to join the JCF board. A director of the Caucasian Institute for Peace Democracy and Development, Dr. Gia Nodia, therefore accepted an invitation to sit on the JCF board. Members of the board also decided to abolish the organizational committee, which had not been a particularly efficient structure. A position of a deputy chairman of the board was also abolished at a General Assembly meeting later the same month. Significant improvements in the overall efficiency of the organization were noted in the second half of 2006.

Many of the lessons learnt through the establishment of the JCF were later also applied to the Tsalka Citizens' Forum. In particular, two meetings of the Tsalka Citizens' Forum were facilitated by the members of the JCF (see below). Furthermore, the JCF also played a role in the proceedings of the Council of National Minorities, established under the auspices of the office of the Public Defender of Georgia (see below).

Link to Academic Outputs

The following are ECMI Working Papers, available at <http://www.ecmi.de/rubrik/58/working+papers/>:

#22: Wheatley, Jonathan, Obstacles Impeding the Regional Integration of the Javakheti Region of Georgia. September 2004, 41 pp., appendix.

#25: Dafflon, Denis, Managing Ethnic Diversity in Javakheti: Two European Models of Multilingual Tertiary Education. February 2006, 25 pp, appendix.

#35: Hedvig Lohm, Dukhobors in Georgia: A Study of the Issue of Land Ownership and Inter-Ethnic Relations in Ninotsminda rayon (Samtskhe-Javakheti), November 2006, 44 pp., appendix. [Note: This Working Paper is available in English and in Russian]

The following is an ECMI Issue Brief, available at

<http://www.ecmi.de/rubrik/59/issue+briefs/>:

#6: Sabanadze, Natalie, Armenian Minority in Georgia: Defusing Interethnic Tension. August 2001, 7 pp.

IV. Phase II (a) Enhancing Minority Governance in Georgia through Establishing a Representative Stakeholder Forum in Kvemo Kartli

A. Needs assessment

Following the establishment of the JCF, ECMI decided to enlarge its focus to encompass the other main area of Georgia in which national minorities are concentrated, Kvemo Kartli. Kvemo Kartli is a multiethnic province with a population of 45% Georgians and 45% Azeris, according to the 2002 Census. Other nationalities include Armenians and Greeks, who are concentrated primarily in the Tsalka district in the west of the province. As in the case of Javakheti, meetings were held with key stakeholders in the autumn of 2004 and a needs assessment on the socio-political and economic obstacles for the integration of Kvemo Kartli was carried out. As before, this was published as an ECMI working paper.

B. Consultation with stakeholders, methodology and project development

During 2005 ECMI carried out extensive meetings both within the region and with central government bodies in order to draw up a list of key stakeholders in Kvemo Kartli region. They also conducted meetings and consultations with central-level civil society and minority representatives and with the most active NGOs of Kvemo-Kartli to assess the overall regional socio-political changes that were taking place in the region. The assessment visits in Kvemo Kartli resulted in subsequent stakeholder meetings in the six districts of Kvemo Kartli during October and November 2005.

However, the local authorities in several districts in Kvemo Kartli did not see the need for external assistance in improving dialogue with the (predominantly Azeri) minorities and other communities in their districts, arguing that with increased local and central budgetary resources during the last two years they were capable of solving basic social and economic issues, which, in their opinion, are the major causes for any interethnic tensions. They indicated that additional resources, such as international development aid would further improve the situation, however highlighting the minority rights/issues could, in their opinion, increase the influence of most radical minority organizations, voicing major discontents of the Azeri minority in the region, thus hindering positive political changes in the country.

Given the reluctance on the part of some local authorities in Kvemo Kartli and given uncertainties regarding the future funding of the project (see below), it was decided to begin the process of establishing a representative stakeholders' forum in just one district of Kvemo Kartli, Tsalka district. Tsalka district was chosen first and foremost because it is a multi-ethnic community comprising four nationalities (Georgians, Armenians, Azeris and Greeks) with special needs. These special needs relate to the fact that the population has been highly unstable over the last decade and a half, with a rapid out-migration of ethnic Greeks and a rapid in-migration of Georgians from mountainous regions of Adjara and Svaneti that have been affected by frequent landslides and avalanches. They also relate to the fact that Tsalka is an economically deprived region with a much degraded local infrastructure. The volatility of the population has aggravated an already difficult economic situation and has led to high levels of uncertainty regarding land and property rights, increasing the risk of inter-communal conflict. It was decided that ECMI's expertise would prove particularly useful in such difficult circumstances and that therefore a Tsalka Citizens Forum (TCF) should be established along similar lines to the JCF.

In general, there is little interaction between the ethnicities of the region, and while there are only 1-2 active NGOs in Tsalka district, the TCF is the first association which seeks to embrace all groups in the region, aimed at enhancing cohesion at the regional level, at the same time as establishing a channel for policy consultation and information exchange between the region and the state. Civil society exists at an embryonic stage in the region, and the local population lacks basic understanding of such concepts as activism, self-organisation and voluntary work, let alone knowledge about grant financing mechanisms and skills to formulate the region's problems and recommendations for its solutions. It was therefore ECMI's aim to enhance this rather low level of civil society capacity.

In the initial stages, activity progress in Tsalka was slightly slower than planned. It took longer than expected to identify project stakeholders that would commit to the programme concept of creating a civil society structure. However, by mid July 2006, after extensive visits in the region and a large number of meetings with formal and informal leaders in the region's communities, ECMI staff managed to form a network of local activists comprising representatives of different nationalities living in the Tsalka region.

C. Funding and partnership

Like the Javakheti project, ECMI's activities in Kvemo Kartli are funded by FRESTA. However, during the inception and the first semi-annual periods, active implementation of the planned project activities was hindered by uncertainties as to the status of the project funding. Moreover, the postponing of a decision of funding for 2006 under Denmark's Caucasus Programme 2005-2007 necessitated a budget revision and non-cost extension for the months of January and February 2006 to sustain ECMI activities in Georgia. Hence, funding initially meant for implementation activities in Kvemo Kartli reallocated to cover costs for the Javakheti project in January and February 2006. For this reason implementation of activities in Kvemo Kartli took place at a reduced level in the first two months of 2006. FRESTA resumed funding in the spring of 2006, allowing ECMI activities in Kvemo Kartli to continue. Since 2006, Danish funding for these activities has been consolidated into Denmark's Caucasus Programme 2006-2007.

As in the case of ECMI's activities in Javakheti, ECMI worked closely with Georgian partners at both national and local level. The possibility of working with the local authorities was indeed a determining factor in the choice of the districts in which ECMI decided to operate (see above).

D. Implementation and outputs

In June-July 2006 ECMI's regional project manager and Kvemo Kartli project assistant identified potential stakeholders in Tsalka representing the region's different nationalities – Armenians, Greeks, Georgians and Azeris. In July-August 2006, ECMI worked on formalizing the network of project stakeholders. Four weekly meetings of the network members were held to define working priorities and set up two thematic working groups on: a) *socio-economic* issues; and b) *cultural-educational* issues. Each working group included 8 members representing the different ethnicities of the region. Overall, in July-December, 32 WG meetings took place in Tsalka. In order to create know-how transfer and a model for civic initiatives to follow, two meetings were facilitated by the members of the Javakheti Citizens Forum.

Due to bureaucratic difficulties in registering the TCF as an association of NGOs at the regional level, and to avoid delays, it was necessary to start with the registration of an NGO comprised of stakeholders. Thus, the NGO "The Tsalka Centre for Civic Development" was registered in Tsalka with ECMI facilitation in November 2006. This organization, which consists of members of the ECMI working groups, will become one of the founders of the Tsalka Citizens Forum, which is expected to be formally registered at the beginning of 2007.

In July 2006, a Resource Centre in Tsalka was established with access for project stakeholders on government legislation and policies. The Resource Centre is hosted free of charge in the building of the regional administration, where minor refurbishing works were carried out. On October 18, the ECMI Resource Center was officially inaugurated.

E. Outcomes/evaluation and lessons learnt

Given the fact that the TCF was only established near the end of the reporting period, it is as yet too early to point to sustainable outcomes and lessons learned.

Link to Academic Outputs

The following are ECMI Working Papers, available at <http://www.ecmi.de/rubrik/58/working+papers/>:

#23: Wheatley, Jonathan, Obstacles Impeding the Regional Integration of the Kvemo Kartli Region of Georgia. February 2005, 49 pp., appendix.

#36: Jonathan Wheatley, Defusing Conflict in Tsalka District of Georgia: Migration, International Intervention and the Role of the State October 2006, 42 pp., appendix.
[Note: This Working Paper is available in English and in Russian]

V. Phase II (b) Enhancing State Capacity on Minority Issues

A. Needs assessment

Georgia made four concrete commitments on its accession to the Council of Europe in 1999: to sign and ratify (within a year of its accession) the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, to sign and ratify (within a year of its accession) the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, to adopt (within two years of its accession) a law on minorities based on the principles of Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1201 (1993) and to adopt (within two years of its accession) a legal framework permitting the repatriation and integration of the Meskhetian Turks. While these Council of Europe requirements had been largely ignored by the administration of former president Eduard Shevardnadze, the new government showed a greater willingness to make progress on these issues. However, the state administration lacked expertise in terms of devising and implementing legislation that could bring Georgia into line with these international standards and was plagued by doubts as to what implementation of these requirements may mean for majority-minority relations in Georgia. ECMI, with its expertise in advising on the adoption and implementation of minority legislation, was ideally placed to make a contribution in this regard.

B. Consultation with stakeholders, methodology and project development

Consultations with central government stakeholders began during the implementation of Phase I, i.e. in the course of establishing the Javakheti Citizens' Forum. The rise to power of a new, reform-oriented government paved the way for easier access to central government actors responsible for minority and regional issues, and while establishing and implementing the initial project in Javakheti, assessments were made as to whether ECMI could also implement a project to support the government in developing structures for enhanced minority governance, especially as the Georgian parliament prepared to ratify the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Within the context of the Javakheti project, close co-operation was forged with the office of the State Minister for Conflict Resolution. This co-operation was highly relevant with regard to the possible repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to Samtskhe-Javakheti, which was bitterly opposed by members of the Armenian community living in Javakheti. In August 2005, ECMI facilitated a meeting between the State Minister for Conflict Resolution, Mr. Giorgi Khaindrava, and around 40 local stakeholders in Javakheti to discuss the issue of the anticipated repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks.

This co-operation led to ECMI's decision to second the former acting Ombudsman of Georgia, Mr. Teimuraz Lomsadze, to work in the Office of the State Minister for Conflict Resolution and to advance the issue of the repatriation of the deported Meskhetian population within government circles. The issue of the Meskhetians came to be one of the main areas of co-operation between ECMI and the Georgian government and work on this issue went hand in hand with a large-scale research project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation entitled "Between Resettlement and Integration: The Meskhetian Turks". Under this project ECMI provided extensive assistance to the Georgian government's efforts in developing policies and strategies concerning the repatriation of the Meskhetians.

Another area of co-operation between ECMI and the Georgian authorities was through the support ECMI provided to the office of the Public Defender of Georgia. In December 2005, ECMI facilitated the establishment of a Council of National Minorities (CNM) under the auspices of the Public Defender and seconded a local human rights expert, Mr. Koba Chopliani to the Public Defender's Office. The aim of the CNM was to bring an institutionalized mechanism for minority-state consultation into being at the national level. In 2006 enhanced efforts were undertaken in order to develop the Council into a viable and respected structure. The CNM came to include some 80 national minority organizations in Georgia. Representatives from the regional stakeholder networks in minority regions, the Javakheti Citizens' Forum and the Tsalka Citizens' Forum (see above) as well as other regionally based minority groups were also encouraged to take an active role in order to ensure a fully representative function of the Council.

A third area of co-operation between ECMI and the Georgian government has been in relation with the commitments Georgia made on joining the Council of Europe (see above). Georgian formally ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in December 2005 and the treaty entered into force in April 2006, and ECMI played a very substantial role in facilitating the ratification of the treaty by organising seminars, conferences and workshops in the summer and autumn of 2005 that brought together representatives of the government, the Council of Europe and minority organisations. The method used was quiet diplomacy and the facilitation of both formal and informal contacts and this played a particularly important role in ensuring that the Georgian parliament ratified the FCNM without declarations (see below). ECMI's consultations with the government on the FCNM continued after its ratification, but attention then turned to its implementation and the preparation of the first state report. In June 2006, two seminars were co-organized with the Council of Europe and the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the implementation of the Convention, respectively with government/parliament and with minority representatives. To enhance the basis for drafting a high quality first state report, due for publication on 1 April 2007, ECMI has a series of consultations with government officials to provide inputs to the content of the report.

Finally, ECMI has also collaborated with the Georgian government on issues of local self-government. With local elections held in Georgia on 5 October, a new law on local self-governance entered into force. The law envisages, *inter alia*, the delegation of more power to local district authorities in administering their own funds. ECMI worked closely with a range of state bodies on this matter, notably the Centre for Effective Governance and State Territorial Reform (CEGSTAR) and the Parliamentary Committee for Regional Policy in enhancing awareness on the implications of the new law and the overall decentralization process. ECMI facilitated several meetings between the above-mentioned state bodies and regional minority representatives to consult on decentralization, and a national expert was seconded to CEGSTAR to support this structure in elaborating policy mechanisms for regulating minority governance based on European standards.

C. Funding and partnership

ECMI's activities on enhancing the institutional capacities of executive bodies of governance are funded by the Neighbourhood Programme Department of the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (FRESTA). Missions to the Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Central Asia to assess the current living conditions of Meskhetian Turks, in which government officials also participated, were funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. The main partner in this project is the Georgian government, specifically the office of the State Minister for Conflict Resolution, the Public Defender of Georgia, the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other state departments. Since 2006, Danish funding for these activities has been consolidated into Denmark's Caucasus Programme 2006-2007.

D. Implementation and outputs

As mentioned above, ECMI played a crucial role in facilitating Georgia's ratification of the FCNM. During September 2005, ECMI organised three events to enhance the awareness in Georgia on the FCNM and to further the process of ratification of the Convention. The three events enabled policy makers, minority representatives and other interested stakeholders to become more familiar with the convention and various fears of its implications were allayed. As a consequence of the activities organised by ECMI, closely coordinated with the efforts of the Council of Europe office in Tbilisi, the ratification process was put back on the agenda in parliament. On 13 October 2005, parliament formally ratified the Framework Convention.

It caused some concern that Georgia might follow the example of Latvia and ratify the FCNM with declarative statements limiting the implementation of specific provisions. Indeed, when the FCNM subsequently was ratified by Parliament, as many as seven declarative statements were made in the ratifying resolution. By quiet diplomacy in the following weeks, however, ECMI conducted a number of informal consultations with Government officials and members of Parliament, including several heads of relevant Parliamentary Committees. The consultations were aimed at persuading the officials to present the ratification to the Council of Europe *without* declarations. According to the procedure of ratification, the ratifying parties have to submit the instruments of ratification to Strasbourg. The instrument may contain declarations, which then become legally binding. During the consultations, ECMI argued that ratification with declarations might significantly damage Georgia's reputation with the international community. With the assistance of a legal expert, Christopher Decker (OSCE Legal Advisor Kosovo), ECMI also produced a letter to the Parliament, which reviewed the resolution of Parliament on ratification and provided advice on Georgia's approach to the ratification process. These efforts appeared to bear fruit. On 22 December, the instrument of ratification was deposited with the Council of Europe without any declarations.

ECMI also elaborated a feasibility study on the implementation of the Framework Convention. This study, conducted in 2006, undertook to identify the gaps in legislation and policy practice for Georgia to comply with the Convention. The report, which is informed by literary sources and fieldwork among minority communities, has been widely circulated among government and minority stakeholders. As a result of efforts by ECMI and the CNM, the Georgian government undertook to establish a working group to draw up the first state report due on 1 April 2007.

Turning to the next major area of co-operation with the Georgian government, ECMI's assistance has brought Georgia to a point when it will soon be ready to adopt a law on the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turk population. Through close cooperation with the State Minister for Conflict Resolution Issues, Mr. Giorgi Khaindrava, ECMI facilitated missions to the Northern Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Central Asia, where Meskhetians are settled in large numbers. The missions allowed the government representatives, including the State Minister himself, to gain further knowledge of the populations and also to engage in active consultations with representatives of Meskhetian organizations, not only in Georgia but also in several other

countries of settlement, including Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. A mission was also conducted to Central Asia, to identify the central archives with registration data on the originally deported Meskhetians. These data will be of significant importance for the Government in the process of screening Meskhetian applicants for citizenship in Georgia.

As an additional step to advance the process, in December 2005 ECMI, in collaboration with the State Commission on Repatriation and in coordination with the Council of Europe, established a working group consisting of prominent Georgian legal expert. The expert group, working from December 2005 through February 2006 completed a draft law on repatriation. Although the Georgian government has been somewhat slow in making preparations for adopting the law, it is envisaged that the law will be adopted at some stage during 2007.

As to the capacity-building aspect of ECMI's co-operation with the Georgian government, with ECMI support the Council of National Minorities (CNM) developed into a powerful forum through which members of national minorities and minority organisations are able to voice their demands and has been particularly active in helping to ensure the implementation of the Framework Convention. During 2006, the CNM drafted a set of elaborate recommendations to the government, emphasizing deficiencies in Georgia's current legislation and policy practice in relation to the provisions of the Framework Convention. Subsequent to the elaboration of the recommendations, which were drafted by four thematic working groups, consultations were made with government stakeholders in December to familiarize them with the views of the minority representatives. In the first half of 2007, the recommendations will be further refined, also taking into account the feedback from the state structures. Eventually the document will be developed into an alternative report, supplementary to Georgia's state report on the FCNM, to be submitted to the Council of Europe.

E. Outcomes/evaluation and lessons learnt

ECMI's co-operation with the Georgian government facilitated the ratification of the Framework Convention in late 2005. This must be seen as a very major achievement of the project. In addition, ECMI also facilitated the establishment of a body, the Council of National Minorities that has become a real forum in which diverse representatives of minority groups have been able to find a voice. Of special importance is the fact that the CNM resolved to draft an alternative report on the implementation of the FCNM, to be submitted to the Council of Europe.

The main lesson learnt here is that quiet diplomacy works with the Georgian government. Many of the issues associated with the implementation of international minority standards are highly controversial in a country in which ethno-national discourse has dominated the public arena for at least two decades. The government is sometimes prone to backsliding as it fears being seen by sectors of society as well as its political opponents as somehow betraying the national idea. There is therefore an over-riding need for a continuation of the kind of sustained persuasion that eventually led to Georgia's ratification of the FCNM. As ECMI gradually takes a back seat role and eventually withdraw from Javakheti as the JCF becomes more sustainable, it will deepen its co-operation with the Georgian government in order to secure that the FCNM is implemented in a satisfactory manner, that the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages is signed, that a law on minorities is adopted and that a legal framework is established to allow the repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks.

Link to Academic Outputs

The following are ECMI Working Papers, available at <http://www.ecmi.de/rubrik/58/working+papers/>:

#15: Sabanadze, Natalie, International Involvement in the South Caucasus. February 2002, 37 pp.

#21: Pentikäinen, Oskari and Tom Trier, *Between Integration and Resettlement: the Meskehtian Turks*. August 2004, 54 pp.

#26: Wheatley, Jonathan, *The Status of Minority Languages in Georgia And the Relevance of Models from Other European States*. March 2006, 37 pp., appendix.

#28: Wheatley, Jonathan, *Implementing the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in Georgia: A Feasibility Study*. October 2006, 64 pp., appendix.

The following are ECMI reports, available at <http://www.ecmi.de/rubrik/57/reports/>:

#56: Blacklock, Denika, *Finding Durable Solutions for the Meskhetians. A Presentation of Preliminary Findings and a Roundtable Discussion with Government and Civil Society Actors in Georgia*. August 2005, 20 pp., appendix.

#57: Tom Trier and Eleonora Sambasile, *Report on the International Conference, 19 September 2005 in Tbilisi 'Towards Ratification' Conference on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*. December 2005, 51 pp., appendix.

In addition, the following edited volumes are to be published in the near future:

Trier, Tom and Andrei Khanzhin (eds) (forthcoming), *The Meskhetian Turks at a Crossroads: Integration, Resettlement or Repatriation*. Publishing date: June 2007. Publisher – English version: LIT Verlag, Germany

Trier, Tom and Andrei Khanzhin (eds) (forthcoming). *Turki-Meskhetintsi pered viborom: Integratsia, Immigratsia ili Repatriatsia*. Publishing date: June 2007
Publisher – Russian version: Aleteya, Russia.