WORK PAPER

THE NEW CHALLENGES OF GEORGIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LAST ELECTIONS
(2012 Parliamentary, and 2013 Presidentially)

Natalia PUTINĂ

Abstract. This article seeks to examine the particularities of Georgian political system and the constitutional reforms that relates to distributions of powers in state. Also, performs an analysis of the activities of political actors and their contribution to state-building and democracy in Georgia: the role of political parties and the party system peculiarities; the role of presidential institution and the contribution of Georgian Presidents to creation and consolidation of new Georgia. The challenges of a new form of constitutional government are examined, focusing on the increasing role played by Georgia’s Dream Coalition and how this new political forces and the oppositions parties responded with new policy agendas.

The article goes to explore the last electoral processes in Georgia, the 2012 parliamentary elections, and 2013 presidential by placing them initially in an historical political context. Having chartered the emergence of political transformation in Georgia in the last years, the article focuses in detail on the events surrounding the new government.

Keywords: Georgia, democratization, political process, electoral campaign

Introduction

One of the most beautiful and prosperous Soviet Republic - Georgia was divested by a series of internal wars (Zucher, 2007: 133). Twenty years ago Georgia won its independence in a bloody civil war. Since then it has endured two

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decades of instability and turmoil. Thousands of people have fled their homeland. Most preserves the memory of those events up today (20 Years Post-soviet, 15 July 2011).

Therefore, the first main challenge for independent Georgia was to safeguard its territorial integrity. Following civil wars in two regions of the country make the Georgian government to lose control over two territorial entities: from 1992, in the former Autonomous District of Ossetia; and in 1993 in the former Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. Since then both regions have been ruled by separatist regimes and the question of Georgia’s territorial integrity remains unresolved. Another territorial problem was related to Adjara region. Nonetheless, although the central government regained full control over the Adjara Autonomous Republic in 2004, a constitutional arrangement providing for the territorial distribution of power has not yet been introduced and institutions for local government are underdeveloped (Research and Dialogue with Political Parties, 2006: 5). That feature of Georgian political process, certainly determine the policy vector and leaves a large footprint in memory and political perceptions of the Georgian population. Today Georgia is a democratic oriented state profoundly facing west. Since 2004 Georgia has started the structural reforms of democratization of the political system. After 2012 they exchanged political forces in government, criticizing many of the reforms undertaken by the Saakashvili’ Government.

1. The evolution of Georgian political system

During the soviet collapse, from October 1989 to May 1991, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a well-known nationalist leader and the first President of new Georgian state, led a parliamentary system. From 1992 to 1995, Eduard Shevarnadze was directly elected as chair of parliament and simultaneously occupied the position of “head of state”. He hadn’t veto power and was accountable to the parliament. The Constitution of independent Georgia was adopted on 24 August 1995. Choice was made in favor of the presidential system. The decision to create a powerful political executive in 1995 was influenced by a dysfunctional 26-party legislature, a vacuum of authority, and the return of the old Soviet “nomennklatura”.
Presidentialism in Georgian conditions was developed into personalized rule in which the head of state was also the executive and had no right to dissolve Parliament. Since 1995 the Georgian Constitution was amended several times. Therefore, the constitutional amendments of 2004 changed to a semi-presidential system with shared executive power. In this way, was created a cabinet of ministers and the post of Prime Minister. The president was head of the state, but no longer chief executive. Simultaneously, President had the right to dissolve the legislature. Those constitutional arrangements led to a greater concentration of authority in the hands of the President at the expense of a balance of powers (Research and Dialogue with Political Parties, 2006: 5) The real balance of power under President Saakashvili was breached. Some authors characterize his government period as a “super-presidential system”

After the August 2008 Russian-Georgian war, the Georgian government declared the launch of a “new wave” of democratic reforms to better balance branches of government, strengthen judicial independence and private property, and increase media freedom. The cornerstone of this effort was to be a constitutional reform that would devolve power away from Georgia’s traditionally strong presidency. After sixteen months of development, deliberation, and discussion, Georgia’s parliament approved a set of far-reaching constitutional amendments on October 15, 2010. These will go into effect in 2013, after Georgia’s 2012 round of parliamentary and 2013 presidential elections (Welt, 2010). Georgia initiated these constitutional amendments in 2009. A constitutional commission was created which was composed of six opposition parties, the ruling party, NGO representatives and academics. They drafted the new stipulations of constitution, which was adapted in October 2010 (Turashvili, 2012). Opposition parties that refused to take part in the Constitutional Commission denounced the reforms and called on the government to postpone making changes to the constitution until after the 2012 parliamentary elections. While the Venice Commission was generally supportive of the amendments, its conclusion coincides with an alternative view within Georgian civil society that constitutional reforms have not gone far enough toward establishing parliamentary rule (Welt, 2010).

The main idea of the constitution was to move from the presidential system of government to the rather mixed system, where the executive power is in the hands of the government, which is elected and accountable to the parliament. So, accordingly, the new amendments will diminish the powers of the president and
increase those of the prime minister, who becomes the head of the government, with the executive authority over domestic and foreign policy (Turashvili, 2012). While president retains veto power, a parliamentary majority will be sufficient to override the veto, rather than the 60 percent currently required. Instead, the president will serve as “the guarantor of national independence and unity of the country,” according to the constitution. In practice, the president will serve as the kingmaker between a parliamentary majority and the government, in the event that a rift arises between them. Specifically, while the new constitution greatly reduces the president’s power to dissolve parliament, it grants him the discretion to do so after a parliamentary vote of no-confidence against the government. The president will be able to veto the no-confidence vote and dissolve parliament if a second vote of no-confidence fails to gain the support of 60 percent of deputies (Welt, 2010).

The president remains Georgia’s commander-in-chief and will be able to declare martial law or a state of emergency (though parliament retains the right to reject such declarations). Innovatively for Georgia, the prime minister will need to countersign nearly all the president’s legal acts – including appointments of military officers and the declaration of a state of emergency. The right to declare war remains the president’s own. Outside of war, foreign policy is to be shared by the president and government. While the latter “exercises” foreign policy, the president “represents” Georgia in foreign relations and negotiates international treaties.

The prime minister, together with the cabinet, will be elected by a simple parliamentary majority, while the president remains head of the state and commander-in-chief of the armed forces but without the right to initiate laws, to introduce the state budget or hold an official post in a political party. Parliamentary powers, however, have not been increased. There are a few new functions, one of them was the approval of the cabinet, but other parliamentary oversight mechanisms, such as scrutiny of state expenditures, holding individual ministers accountable and the setting up of temporary investigative commissions, wasn’t strengthened, so the parliament has limited power. For instance, the parliament cannot amend the budget without government consent (Khalamadze V., Jibgasshvili. Z., 2010). The Venice Commission, which is the Council of Europe’s advisory body on constitutional and other legislative matters, noted that the role of the parliament in budget matters is too limited. So even after 2013, much power
and influence will still remain in the executive branch (Venice Commission, 2013).

The Venice Commission expressed guarded approval of the redistribution to the government of some powers hitherto vested in the president, but implied that these changes did not go far enough. It noted that "the president plays a political role, which is not coherent with the role of impartial guarantor of the constitutional order of the state and its continuity. In addition, the president "still retains important powers" with regard to international relations, the armed forces, and during a parliament move to vote no confidence in the government (Caucasus Report, 2014). In essence, some opinions said that the constitution is a shift from super-presidentialism to super prime ministership (International Crisis Group, 2010; Khalamadze V., Jibgashvili. Z., 2010).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliament name (generic / translated)</th>
<th>Sakartvelos Parlamenti / Parliament</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Parliament</td>
<td>Unicameral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voting System</td>
<td>mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of designation</td>
<td>directly elected 150,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-77 seats by the Proportional Reprezentation system (closed party list system), one nationwide constituence for PR system;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-73 single-member constituencies for the majority system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parties exceeding a 5-per cent threshold are entitled to win seats under the PR system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- 73 seats by the Majority system (first past the post): If no candidate secures 30 per cent of the valid vote, run-off elections will be held between the two leading candidates.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1.1. Party system in Georgia

Political parties are indispensable for making democracy work and deliver. Finding the proper conditions for better internal functioning and effective legal
regulation of political parties is of key importance anywhere. The recent history of political parties in Georgia begins with the first free elections, which were held under Soviet rule in 1990. At the moment, the most important political parties with the highest profile are: United National Movement; New Rights; Industry will Save Georgia (Industrialists); Conservative Party of Georgia; Leiborist (Labour) Party; Union of Georgian Traditionalists; Republican Party of Georgia; Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia (Political Party Finance Report, 2011).

**Parties in Georgia: ideologies, social groups represented, why and when established**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Ideology/Social Groups Represented</th>
<th>Why and When Established</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leiborist (Labour) Party</td>
<td>Left-wing, centrist; middle class; established to represent broad strata of population in 1995</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>United National Movement</td>
<td>No specific ideology; claims to represent the whole population; says it was created because the country was developing in the wrong way; 2002.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party of Georgia</td>
<td>Right-wing, centrist; neo-conservative; represents all social strata; established to struggle for independence in 1978</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Georgian Traditionalists</td>
<td>Right-wing, centrist, conservative; middle class; created as a part of the national independence movement to participate in elections and build independent Georgia; 1990.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Rights Right</td>
<td>-wing, conservative, middle class; business groups, intelligentsia,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| **Industry will Save Georgia** | Right-wing, middle class; established to support local industries by means of reducing tax burden, improving investment climate, representing business interests; 1999 |
| **Conservative Party of Georgia** | Conservative, right-wing; various social strata who should be supported by the state; says it was established because the country should be arranged differently; 2005 |

Political parties are governed by the constitution of 1995 and the Law on Political Associations of Citizens (1997). Both provide a high level of negative freedoms and impose only limited restrictions on the functioning and formation of political parties. The law prohibits the creation of regionally-based parties; since the country’s territorial integrity is one of the most pressing issues to have emerged following independence. On the other side the legal framework in the party’s regulation is very permissive related to conditions of creation and registration (Foresti, Welton, Jijelava, 2010).

Under the Organic Law of Georgia on Political Unions of Citizens, state funding is one of the components of a party’s assets. Funds are allocated in the Georgian state budget annually to provide financial support to the activities of political parties: 1) direct transfer of funds to parties and 2) the transfer of funds to a legal entity of public law – The Centre for Electoral Systems Development, Reform and Training\(^3\). The Fund’s goal is to promote the development of the governmental sector and the establishment of a healthy and competitive system. According to “Political Party Finance Report” realized by Transparency

International – Georgia a total of 14 political parties received funding from the state budget in 2007-2009 (Political Party Finance Report, 2011).

The Law on Political Associations of Citizens prohibits regional or ethnically based parties. This way can have positive aspects that ethnically based parties can deepen conflict in multinational states as Georgia. On the other hand, such legal provision doesn’t stimulate ethnic minorities’ representation. Analysis of the ethnic profile of the legislature of Georgia shows an unfavorable situation. So since 1995, when 16 non-Georgians were elected to a 235-seat parliament, there has been a decline in representation. In 1999, it was 14, and in 2004 it was 8. In 2008, six made it to a smaller parliament of 150 members (Foresti, Welton, Jijelava, 2010).

Likewise, non-Georgians are rarely among the top candidates on closed party lists and usually gain their seats in single-member districts. Open lists, which allow electors to choose who to vote for, would be better for Georgia’s minorities, but even then, larger numbers in parliament do not guarantee better representation. Many non-Georgian parliamentarians are products of local patron-client network and have little influence in the legislature. Quotas or ethnic parties may not resolve the issue. Georgia’s minorities are too small to reach the electoral barrier (Foresti, Welton, Jijelava, 2010).

Permissive rules for the registration of a political party in Georgia, also generates fragmentation of the party system. Thus, in Georgia are currently about 200 registered political parties. The large number of existing political parties does not affect very much the number of electoral candidates involved in parliamentary elections, that only less than a quarter of the existing parties are electoral or political actively. Over the years there has been a decrease in the number of registered party in parliamentary election campaigns. For example, in the 1999 parliamentary elections was 50 political parties-candidates; in the 2002 local elections - 41 parties-candidates; in the 2003 parliamentary elections - 22 parties-candidates; and in the 2004 parliamentary elections - 20 parties-candidates.

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2. The Presidents of Independent Georgia

Georgia has had three presidents since it eventually regained its independence in December 1991 when the Soviet Union unceremoniously disintegrated. Most Georgians these days find it difficult to talk highly of any of them.

The first of them was Zviad Gamsakhurdia. During Soviet period, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was a prominent human rights campaigner in the 1960s and 1970s. He became identified with the Democratic Movement in Russia (Jones, 2012: 54). In independent Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia embodied the spirit of euphoric nationalism that swept away Soviet power. Oftentimes, his short period in office is seen as a period of chaos, criminality and confusion. After some, Gamsakhurdia was neither well suited nor well prepared for the job, yet Georgians elected him willingly and convincingly for what he represented (All for Georgians to Lose, 2013). “The post-Soviet environment under Gamsakhurdia – a lumpen classlessness with confusion and rage directed against the authorities, the intelligentsia, the West, and national minorities – has moderated, but not disappeared” (Jones, 2012: 6). Moreover, during his short career as a politician Gamsakhurdia capitalized both on his merit as a dissident, and he arguably mixed politics with his convictions about the “missions” of the Georgian nation (Zurcher, 2007: 128). Political context forced him to abandon the position of President. A few years later, on December 31, 1993 he died under murky circumstances. Most observers outside Georgia accept the view that it was suicide (Zurcher, 2007: 29).

The second President, Edward Shevardnadze, as called “the old fox of the Caucasus” is considered probably one of the politicians that did most to end the cold war. He is generally characterized as a pragmatic politician who understood well Georgians. On the other hand, he was credited to have brought stability and for having pulled Georgia back from the brink. On the other side, he is also identified with a period of stagnation and of laissez-faire politics of the worst kind (All for Georgians to Lose, 2013). When Eduard Shevardnadze initially took over from Georgia’s first President, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, he was also seen by many locals and the majority of the international community as a liberator and reformer. Initially, he lived up to that image, successfully marginalizing many of the criminal and paramilitary elements that had first brought him to power and building strong relations with the West. However, his inability to fight corruption
gradually undermined his administration and left it unable to provide the most rudimentary of social services or social protections. By 2003 it had become apparent that Shevardnadze’s government was extremely weak. His party performed catastrophically in the 2002 local elections and a number of high-profile figures, including Mikheil Saakashvili, Zurab Zhvania and Nino Burjanadze, who had once been members of his Government, became strong opponents. Other opposition groups, such as the Labour Party, the New Rights, and the Revival Party also gained ground (Foresti, Welton, Jijelava, 2010). In the end he was swept away from power in a wave of public discontent that same wave swept Mikheil Saakashvili into power after the bravado of the “Rose Revolution (All for Georgians to Lose, 2013).

The ex-President, Mikheil Saakashvili, the country’s third President since independence, was first brought to power as the result of post-election protests in 2003 against then President Eduard Shevardnadze’s regime and the resulting change of power, known as the Rose Revolution (Foresti, Welton, Jijelava, 2010). He had immense popularity to start with – even if the 95% vote that he claims to have polled in the 2004 election was inflated and exaggerated, and the first sign of bigger problems to come. M. Saakashvili was a reformer to start with, but having decided early on that reform was too difficult and too risky, he swapped to being a builder (All for Georgians to Lose, 2013).

The known author of several books on Caucasian history and politics, Stephen Jones, in one of his publication characterized the first three Georgia’s president in this way: “under Gamsakhurdia, democracy’s failing derived from a simplistic belief in sovereign statehood and majority rule; under Shevarnadze, democracy was eaten away by corrupt and unaccountable networks; under Saakavili, swift and haughty have policies have aliened large segment of the citizenry, including national minorities and the emerging “middle class” he wants on his side”. In his opinion all three leaders failed to achieve a balance between the needs of de-standing – reducing the state’s role in the economy, creating greater institutional transparency, and strengthening national security (Jones, 2012).

October 27, 2013 marked Georgia’s sixth presidential election since independence and the winner, the fourth President Giorgi Margvelashvili, assumed a narrowed set of powers. Constitutional reforms shifting Georgia from a presidential to a parliamentary system was taken effect with the inauguration of the actual head of state. The significance of that election thus lies at least as much
in the environment and processes surrounding it as in its outcome (National Democratic Institute, 2013).

3. **Georgia’s legal framework related to elections**

There are five key documents regulating presidential elections in Georgia:

1. *Constitution of Georgia*
2. *Election Code of Georgia*
3. *Law on Political Unions of Citizens*
4. *Central Election Commission Regulations*
5. *Criminal Code of Georgia*

3.1 **Parliamentary Elections**

The electoral system adopted in Georgia uses the “parallel” form of mixed member proportional (MMP). The 150-member parliament is elected for a four-year term under a mixed electoral system: 73 members are elected in single-mandate constituencies under a majoritarian system and 77 on closed party lists in one nationwide constituency under a proportional system. A majoritarian candidate must obtain at least 30 per cent of valid votes cast in the constituency to be elected. If no candidate reaches this threshold, a run-off is held within 14 days between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes. The mandates of the members of the Parliament shall be distributed only among those political associations and electoral blocks, which obtained at least seven per cent of the votes of the electors, participated in the elections held under the proportional system.

Elections are held regularly but there has been no change in the ruling authorities through elections since independence. Elections in Georgia are characterized by persistent electoral fraud spurred the ‘Rose Revolution’ in 2003, when the results of the parliamentary elections were partly annulled and President Eduard Shevardnadze resigned his post. The leader of the Rose Revolution, Mikheil Saakashvili, was elected as President in 2004 and his party, the United National Movement, won an overwhelming majority after the elections to Parliament were repeated in 2004.

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5 *The Constitution of Georgia*, adopted on 24 August 1995, art.50, p.2
The most of international reports on election described the last 2012 parliamentary elections as the first peaceful change of government since Georgia’s independence in 1991. Thus, the Georgia’s Dream Bloc (GD), led by Bidzina Ivanishvili, won 85 mandates and the United National Movement (UNM), led by President Mikheil Saakashvili, won 65 mandates. Thus UNM went into opposition and sent levers in the hands of a new government political force – Georgian Dream Bloc. The period since those elections has seen tense co-habitation between the current governing coalition and the opposition. Arrests, trials and interrogations of some United National Movement members following the 2012 elections negatively impacted the environment around the by-elections (OSCE/ODIHR, 27 April, 2013). While the United National Movement characterized such actions as political persecution, the Georgian Dream justified it as accommodation of public demand to “restore justice” for alleged crimes by UNM officials in previous government (OSCE/ODIHR, 27 April, 2013: 3). Actual parliament majority owned by The Georgian Dream coalition comprised the following parties:

- Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia
- Conservative Party of Georgia
- Industry will save Georgia
- Republican Party of Georgia
- Our Georgia - Free Democrats
- National Forum

3.2. Presidential Elections

The President of Georgia shall be elected on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot for a term of five years. The same person may be elected the President only for two consecutive terms. Any person may be elected the President of Georgia if he/she is a native-born citizen of Georgia, having the right to vote, has attained the age of 35, has lived in Georgia for at least fifteen years and lives in Georgia by the day on which the election is scheduled. Regular elections for Presidency shall be held in October of the calendar year when the presidential authority expires. The President of Georgia shall fix the date of the elections not later than within 60 days before the elections.

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7 The Constitution of Georgia, adopted on 24 August 1995
The right to nominate a candidate to the office of the President shall be vested with a political association of citizens or a stirring group. The nomination shall be confirmed by the signatures of not less than 50,000 electors. A candidate shall be deemed to be elected if he/she has obtained more than half of the votes of participants. (If no candidate has received the required number of votes in the first round, a second round of elections shall be held in two weeks after an official announcement of the first round results. Two candidates having the best results in the first round shall be put to the vote in the second round. The candidate who received more votes shall be deemed to be elected. The President of Georgia shall not have the right to hold any other position except for a party position, engage in entrepreneurial activity, and receive salary or another permanent remuneration for any other activity.\(^8\).

4. The 2013 Presidential Elections

The 2013 presidentially elections are considered a turning point for Georgia in all kinds of ways, and set a completely unprecedented and unique pattern of doing politics in the Caucasus region. Whilst Georgia has now turned the page in its modern political history a new set of leadership, quite unknown to the Georgian public are set to take the front line. Georgia still faces many serious problems, political, institutional and most of all economic. Yet the new leadership has a unique opportunity to build a new future for the Caucasus republic (Caucasian Elections Watch, October 27, 2013). Although the country was moving toward a semi-parliamentary system, the newly-elected President retains significant internal and external powers and political leverages. Therefore, the prospect of an opposition candidate retaining the role of President may have a significant impact on Georgia’s political landscape (International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 2013: 3).

Georgian citizens abroad, on October 27 has possibility to vote in the presidential election in 38 other countries. While Greece has have the most out-of-country voting sites, with seven locations, Georgians may also cast their ballot at multiple polling stations in the United States (3), Azerbaijan (3), Turkey (3), Ukraine (3) and Spain (2). There are approximately 1.5 million Georgian citizens

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\(^8\) The Constitution of Georgia, adopted on 24 August 1995
living abroad, although citizens residing or travelling to countries without polling
stations was not be eligible to vote. Georgians residing in Russia was not having
the opportunity to vote due to the absence of diplomatic representation in the

On September 23, 2013, the Central Election Commission (CEC) of
Georgia finished the candidate registration process, registering 23 candidates.
Overall, the CEC received 54 applications from parties and initiative groups; 31
were rejected on various legal grounds. This included the former Foreign Minister
of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili, whose appeal was rejected by the Tbilisi Court

Thus, in the 2013 Presidential elections 23 people are officially running to
take over from Mikheil Saakashvili. Ten candidates have been appointed by
political parties, 13 by initiative groups. There were three women running for
President of the 23 registered candidates. It’s Nino Burjanadze, leader of
“Democratic Movement – United Georgia Party”, as well as Nino Chanishvili and
Nesta Kirtadze who were nominated by initiative groups. Nino Burjanadze was
one of the favorites of electoral race and she’s political experience in the lidding
functions has assured for her the third place in the electoral score⁹.

List of candidates in 2013 Presidential Elections¹⁰

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Party/Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Giorgi Margvelashvili</td>
<td>Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia, former Minister of Education and Science and the candidate of the party in office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Davit Bakradze</td>
<td>United National Movement, ENM, former President of the Parliament (2008-2012);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nino Burjanadze,</td>
<td>leader of the Democratic Movement-United Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Shalva Natelashvili,</td>
<td>leader of the Labour Party;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>– Giorgi Targamadze</td>
<td>leader of the Christian-Democratic Movement;</td>
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</tbody>
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⁹ [www.cec.gov.ge](http://www.cec.gov.ge)
¹⁰ [www.cec.gov.ge](http://www.cec.gov.ge)
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Akaki Asatiani, former President of the Supreme Council under the government of Zviad Gamsakhourdia (1991-1992) and leader of the Traditionalist Union;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Sergo Javakhidze, leader of the Party for a Just Georgia;</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Zurab Kharatishvili, European Democrats of Georgia, chair of the Central Electoral Committee;</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Koba Davitashvili, People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Teimuraz Mzhavia, Christian Democratic People’s Party;</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Nestan Kirtadze, leader of the International Movement for Peace, Democracy and Development Georgia-Abkhazia-Ossetia appointed by an initiative group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Mikheil Saluashvili, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Giorgi Liluashvili, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Levan Chachua, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Avtandil Margiani, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Nugzar Avaliani, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Georgi Chikhladze, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Teimuraz Bobokhidze, appointed by an initiative group;</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Nino Chanishvili, appointed by an initiative group</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Kartlos Gharibashvili, appointed by an initiative group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. – Tamaz Bibiluri,</td>
<td>appointed by an initiative group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Mamuka Chokhonelidze, appointed by an initiative group</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. –</td>
<td>Mamuka Melikishvili, appointed by an initiative group</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The delegation accredited as observers in elections noted with satisfaction the consensus between the main political stakeholders concerning the recent amendments to the election legislation and the “Law on Political Unions of Citizens”, adopted by Parliament in July and August 2013. It is now essential to implement the amended legislation in an efficient manner, namely banning the misuse of administrative resources, ensuring the accuracy of voters’ lists, the transparency and control of sources of funding and expenditures by political parties and candidates (PACE, 2013).

The 2013 Presidential Elections overall electoral turnout was 47 %, the lowest of any election in Georgia since independence. Although past instances of electoral fraud may have increased electoral turnout significantly particularly the 2000 presidential elections. The most recent elections have been increasingly free and fair in opinion of the international observers. The result of votes indicates lower than usual electoral participation in both the 2012 and the 2013 elections. Also telling is the decline in turnout in the last two elections among the ethnic minority concentrated districts in southern Georgia. These districts have historically supported the party of power during electoral cycles (and, after being caught with high votes for United National Movement in 2012, have begun to switch loyalties) but despite such partisan shifting, electoral turnout among these groups is lower than the turnout for the country as a whole. This downward trend is one to watch; since it offers a significant change in how we might predict electoral behavior in Georgia (George, 2013).

Regarding other features of elections in Georgia can be distinguished complaints about electoral violations. That has traditionally been rife in Georgia’s ethnic minority regions. It is thus particularly important for voters in these regions to have access to election materials in their native languages so they can make informed choices. The CEC has indicated that it will publish the voters’ lists and ballots in minority languages as well as Georgian in nine of the 73 districts. The CEC is conducting trainings and providing materials to election administrators in minority languages. It is also conducting voter education and outreach activities in cooperation with civil society organizations representing ethnic minorities (National Democratic Institute, 2013). The delegation of observers was informed of cases of intolerance toward minorities. In this regard, it finds any political exploitation of sensitive ethnic and religious issues for electoral purposes unacceptable, all the more so in a multi-ethnic society such as Georgia [PACE,
Well-designed elections are vital to the integration of minorities and women. The electoral system in Georgia serves non-Georgians and women poorly (common in Western democracies too). There are provisions in the UEC for ballot paper in native language, but Georgian political leaders rarely make the effort. These are some serious gaps and overcoming them will greatly contribute to the democratization of the Georgian state.

Turnout in the election was lower than in the Parliamentary elections in 2012 but enough to ensure that a re-run is not necessary. The candidate, from Georgian’s Dream, Giorgi Margvelashvili wins the election in the first round with the 62.12%\(^{11}\). G. Margvelashvili utilized a risky mobilization strategy. He declared that in case of incapacity to win the election from the first round he will retire from election campaign. In this way he managed to mobilize his own sympathizers to actively participation in first round of scrutiny, in time that the other candidates not succeeded to convince the electorate to come to vote and to give them their vote and express their confidence. The success of Georgian’s Dream candidate was assured by the changes and transformations on political landscape in Georgia. The failure of United National Movement in 2012 parliamentary elections was started the decline of political influence of Saakashvili as a politician in Georgia and that denote a desire of Georgian people to new challenges and opportunities for his country. Ex-prime Minister, Bedzina Ivanishvili, the architect and the same time the heavy artillery of new party Georgia’s Dream and of the Georgia’s Dream Bloc, constituted by six political parties (mentioned earlier) was a leader match for his opponent M. Saakashvili. None of parties (Georgia’s Dream Bloc) has enough political force to have created a real opposition to United National Movement. Their share of the Georgian political arena as an independent political party is minor.

Therefore, this election was a contrast between the party politics and the personality of candidates. Bedzina Ivanishvili led the GD coalition to government at 2012 parliamentary elections. He became the most popular leaders of Georgia’s landscape at that moment. Even before triggering the Presidential election campaign, B. Ivanishvili declared his retirement from political live after the formation of new government. Coming from the business, Będzina make a choice in favor of this area. In this context it was said that he has performed his role as

\(^{11}\) [www.cec.gov.ge](http://www.cec.gov.ge)
messiah of Georgian policy, having the purpose of legal removing from power the UNM and its leader M. Saakashvili. In order to ensure success to GD coalition candidate, G. Margvelashvili, was utilized the strategies of “images transfer”. A lot of opinion considers that Ivanishvili will remain in Georgia’s political landscape as a “shadow cardinal”. Moreover ex-Prime Minister declared on this subject that “My activities will be absolutely transparent. And I will have a certain amount of influence, of course. At the same time, I do not look at this influence as something blameworthy. Quite the opposite, I will try to enhance this influence. How else can one be an active member of civil society?” (Ivanishvili, 2013).

Conclusions
The recent elections in Georgia, which resulted shrieking came to power Saakashvili ‘s opposition undoubtedly awakens us some questions. First, it is interesting the position of the new government in foreign relations. Georgia is a post-Soviet state that has borders with Russia and political relations between these states are difficult to estimate. UNM and Saakashvili President showed deep western favorites. New invested Prime Minister 31-year-old Irakli Garibashvili was confirmed by the Parliament on November 20 as Georgia’s new Prime Minister with 93 votes to 19. In this way the new government in Georgia was established. Both new President, as well as Prime Minister revealed the continuation of the Georgian political course in democratization and Europeanization. So Garibashvili declared on this subject that the foreign policy of Georgia will expressed the choice of Georgian people, but he see the Georgia future is only in the EU and NATO aspiration.

Another question relates to the changes in the Constitution of Georgia and the effectiveness of these reforms. Like other new states of post-Soviet space (Ukraine, Moldova), Georgia is still under processing and searching of effective and appropriate governance model. History of Georgian political system has already experienced at least three forms of government, each of them in political conditions in Georgia have demonstrated generosity classic disadvantages. The immaturity of the political class in Georgia and its inability to respect the democratic rules in political activity determine until today the inability of conciliation between government and opposition. In practical terms, each new president of Georgia operates under a new constitutional arrangement. This new constitutional changes provide important prerogatives sharing between the
President, Prime Minister and Parliament. Option in favor of a semi-parliamentary regime is clear. Was wished a de-concentration of Presidential power, but as the new political power will be able to put into practice is a question of time.

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