

**GRASS**  
REFORMANDA



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*GRASS currently has more than 20 staff members*

### Board

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GRASS

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### **Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS)**

GRASS is a non-partisan, non-governmental policy watchdog and multi-profile think tank which provides policy recommendations to the government, conducts research-based analysis and raises public interest and awareness on a wide range of public policy issues.

GRASS was established in October 2012 and is well positioned within Georgia's non-governmental sector. With its initiatives and activities, it continues to support the implementation of democratic reforms, the building of a strong civil society and the transparency and accountability of state institutions together with the ongoing process of Georgia's Europeanisation.

### **Projects and Programmes**

Our main projects and programmes are in the following fields:

#### **European Integration and Foreign Policy**

GRASS is a strong advocate for Georgia's Europeanisation process. GRASS conducts research, produces policy papers and policy briefs regarding the Georgia's integration to the EU and NATO, as well as other pertinent issues of foreign policy. Through its research, GRASS provides policy recommendations to relevant state agencies. GRASS has assisted the ministry of foreign affairs, the president's administration, the state minister's office on European integration and the respective parliamentary committees to become acquainted with the best practices of coordinating European policies.

On a number of occasions, GRASS has brought together major policymakers, politicians, experts, media and civil society representatives and contributed to initiating debates about the next steps for deepening EU-Georgia relations against the background of an effective and timely implementation of the AA/DCFTA and ways in which to instrumentalise the Eastern Partnership Initiative (EaP) for advancing Georgia's membership perspective. Largely due to GRASS's efforts, the government committed itself to developing the Roadmap for Georgia's EU Membership which will determine pragmatic policies and instruments

for intensifying the integration process with the EU.

GRASS has been contributing to the strengthening of a broad political consensus over Georgia's fundamental foreign policy issues. Following the government change in 2012, GRASS facilitated a dialogue between the opposition and the government on how to best enforce foreign policy priorities. The organisation was a major contributor to the first bipartisan resolution about Georgia's foreign policy which was adopted in 2013. GRASS put its efforts into creating the draft text for the resolution and advocating it among members of the Georgian Dream and the United National Movement.

GRASS works actively with the general public, including students, teachers, civil servants, journalists, representatives of civil society organisations, etc., to promote awareness and increase knowledge about the benefits of Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration.

#### **Conflict Resolution and Security**

GRASS is an active CSO player in Georgia which contributes to conflict transformation and confidence building between divided communities. GRASS has been a strong advocate of applying a status-neutral approach to humanitarian, security and trade

issues vis-à-vis Abkhazia and South Ossetia/Tskhinvali Region. GRASS's concept was reflected in the Government's 2018 Peace Initiative "A Step to a Better Future" which aims at developing economic and education cooperation between conflict divided communities in Georgia through the application of depoliticised/status-neutral instruments and formats. As one of the mediators in this process, GRASS organised a number of 1.5 track meetings with participation of Abkhaz and Georgian stakeholders to discuss the peace initiative and other relevant trade, education and healthcare issues.

GRASS has brought together academics, researchers, practitioners and authorities from Sokhumi and Tbilisi on a number of occasions to promote professional ties and contacts. In addition, GRASS is working with Abkhaz colleagues to contribute to improving emergency medical service in Abkhazia, through training medical personnel in Tbilisi.

GRASS has produced policy papers which have served as food-for-thought documents for the government on possible ways to respond to the occupation of Georgia's breakaway regions as well as illegal "borderization" and the unlawful detention of citizens of Georgia by Russian "border guards". GRASS is a strong advocate for

establishing a comprehensive and long-term anti-annexation policy which can only work effectively with the insurance of close coordination with the US, the EU and other international partners.

GRASS is a member of the security and think-tank community under the auspices of the President and the National Security Council of Georgia. The platform brings together experts and professionals from the security field, organises regular meetings and an annual conference, Tbilisi Strategic Discussions, to assess existing threats, identify possible solutions and come up with policy suggestions.

### **Anti-Western Propaganda**

GRASS works in a number of directions on the issue of anti-Western propaganda that has become a significant challenge to societal cohesion in Georgia, Europe and beyond. GRASS's research activities in this field aim to explore the vulnerabilities in politics, economics, foreign policy, security, media and society that may provide a fertile ground for illicit foreign interference.

GRASS developed partnerships with think tanks in Eastern and Central Europe that serve as a platform for analysing the messages and channels of propaganda,

studying and exposing fringe and populist groups, exploring state responses to the emerging threats and learning the international practices for combating the hybrid threats. Recently, Zinc Network and consortium of partners selected GRASS among 57 organizations all around Europe to counter Kremlin disinformation.

GRASS cooperates with the parliament and relevant governmental agencies in Georgia with the aim to increase their awareness regarding the anti-Western propaganda and propose recommendations for developing viable and sustainable solutions for the country's resilience building. GRASS has contributed to a decision of different political factions in the parliament to develop a legislative basis for countering information warfare.

GRASS directs its efforts at the grassroots level to increase societal resilience against propaganda. To this end, GRASS fact-checks disinformation stories and debunks defamatory information widely running through the Georgian media. In addition, GRASS conducts awareness raising campaigns in the country's rural regions and delivers public lectures and debates at educational institutions countrywide.

## Minority Issues

GRASS addresses issues related to the integration of ethnic minorities as full-fledged constituents of the Georgian public. The organisation conducts in-depth analysis and research to identify challenges and problems encountered by different ethnic groups, including Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Roma, Chechens and Kists in Georgia. Research findings are communicated with relevant governmental institutions such as the ministry of education and science and the office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Integration.

GRASS works to enhance networking and policy dialogue between minority communities and the government as well as to research and monitor state policy on minority issues. GRASS dedicates its efforts to empowering regional minority organisations and contributes to improving their advocacy and monitoring skills on minority rights protection. GRASS has assisted regional organisations in drafting the first shadow reports for the UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD).

Since 2017, GRASS has been working on women issues in the Pankisi Gorge, which is resided by Kists representing ethnic and

religious minority. The organization activities are dedicated to empowering local women by raising their awareness on their rights, as well as by providing them with legal assistance in family disputes.

## Fact-Checking

FactCheck ([www.factcheck.ge](http://www.factcheck.ge)) is one of GRASS's flagship projects which aims to rate the factual accuracy of statements made by public figures. Through in-depth analysis of public policy issues, including the economy, justice, education, healthcare, local governance, etc., FactCheck has contributed to increasing the transparency of Georgian politics and has become a vigilant advocate for the accountability of the government as well as the opposition.

Established in May 2013, FactCheck has published more than 2,500 research-based articles as of today. By verifying statements against the reality, fact-checking contributes to the building of a well-informed electorate which allows for a fact-based political discourse and a well-informed choice at the election booths.

In 2017, FactCheck became a verified signatory of the International Fact-Checking Network's fact-checkers' code of principles. This international recognition confirms

FactCheck Georgia's commitments to non-partisanship and fairness, transparency of sources, transparency of funding and organisation, transparency of methodology and open and honest corrections.

## Research

- ❖ Paata Gaprindashvili, Gogi Zoidze, Mariam Tsitsikashvili, et al. (2018) "Propaganda Made-to-Measure: How our Vulnerabilities Facilitate Russian Influence."
- ❖ Paata Gaprindashvili. (2017) "The Only Way Georgia Can Ensure its Long-Term Security is to Become a NATO Member." GRASS
- ❖ Paata Gaprindashvili. (2018) "Views of the OSCE from Georgia." GRASS
- ❖ Paata Gaprindashvili. (2018) "The Future of Russia-Georgia Relations: The Need for a Comprehensive Anti-Annexation Policy" in *Georgian and Russian Experts Searching for Ways of Normalisation*. GFSIS
- ❖ Paata Gaprindashvili. (2017) "How to Improve Russia-Georgia Talks?" in *Georgia and Russia: In Search of Ways for Normalisation*. GFSIS

- ❖ ISM, GRASS, et al. (2017) “Facilitating Transition of European Standards in the EaP Countries.” GRASS
- ❖ Shota Gelovani. (2017) “Wannacry – A Smart Virus with an Unknown Origin.” GRASS
- ❖ Gogi Zoidze, Giorgi Goguadze, et al. (2017) “EU Standards Velocity within EaP Countries: Evaluation of the Progress and Challenges in Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia.” GRASS
- ❖ Sandra Veloy Mateu. (2017) “Roma Youth in Georgia: What are the Challenges?” GRASS
- ❖ Charlotte Hermann, et al. (2017) “The Effects of Counter-Terrorism on Aspects of Human Rights and Democratic Values in Western Europe.”
- ❖ Charlotte Hermann and Giorgi Goguadze. (2016) “The Effects of Counter-Terrorism on Human Rights and Democratic Values in Western Europe.”
- ❖ Tornike Zurabashvili. (2016) “Evaluation of the Economic Part (DCFTA) of the Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia (2014- 2015) – Public Procurement.”
- ❖ Tornike Zurabashvili (2016) “Restricting Education in the Native Language in the Gali District: In Search of Solutions.”

- ❖ Sandra Veloy Mateu (2016) “The Armenian Minority in the Samtskhe-Javakheti Region of Georgia: Civic Integration and its Barriers.”
- ❖ Sergi Kapanadze, et al. (2016) “Lecture Notes on Abkhazia, Georgia.”
- ❖ Ani Chkhikvadze (2016) “A ‘Promised Land: ‘Elite Discourse on ‘Europeanness’ in Georgia.”
- ❖ Giorgi Goguadze and Sergi Kapanadze. (2015) “Daesh and Challenges Facing Georgia.”
- ❖ Sergi Kapanadze, et al. (2015) “Improving the Coordination of European Policies in Georgia Based on the Practices of Visegrad Countries.”
- ❖ GRASS. (2014) “A New Stage in the Relations between Georgia and Russia: Necessity to Form an Anti-Annexation Strategy.”
- ❖ GRASS. (2014) “Amendments in the Immigration Policy and Challenges Resulting from It.”
- ❖ Sergi Kapanadze, et al. (2014) “Analysing Ways to Promote Research in Social Sciences in Georgia’s Higher Education Institutions.”
- ❖ Elene Khoshtaria. (2013) “Recommendations to the Government of Georgia on Moving the Administrative Borders by the Russian Federation and Possible Ways to Responding to the

Unlawful Detention of Georgian Citizens by the Russian Border Guards.” GRASS

- ❖ GRASS (2013) “Analysis of the Possible Amendments and Additions to the Law on Higher Education and the Possible Impact of these Changes on Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.”

#### **Donors**

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

United States Department of State

United Nations Development Programme

National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

Embassy of Switzerland in Georgia

European Commission

UN Association of Georgia (UNAG)

Embassy of the Netherlands in Georgia

Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)

Open Society Institute

International Visegrad Fund

Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation

The German Marshall and Robert Bosch  
Stiftung

Lithuanian Embassy

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech  
Republic

### **Membership**

OSCE Network of Think Tanks and  
Academic Institutions

International Fact-Checking Network  
(IFCN)

Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum  
Georgian National Platform

Coalition for Euro-Atlantic Georgia

Civic Platform “No to Phobia”