

GAGAUZIA DIALOGUE

CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVE FUNCTIONING OF THE GAGAUZIA AUTONOMY WITHIN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.

GAGAUZIA WORKING GROUP WILL HOLD LAST MEETING IN CURRENT SESSION



The Gagauzia Working Group will hold its final meeting for the current Parliamentary Period on July 4th, 2018.

This meeting marks the end of the current phase of the parliamentary dialogue process between Chisinau and Comrat. The meeting Agenda will review progress made during the past 12 months, including proposed revisions to legislation in the fields of culture and health.

These proposals represent the fruit of group's ongoing work on harmonizing legislation to ensure the better functioning of the Gagauzia autonomy in the Republic of Moldova.

In 2017, the Moldovan Parliament passed four cultural laws with revisions suggested by the Working Group to better represent the needs of Gagauzia. The group will also finalize a report of their work in 2018 and discuss plans for next phase of dialogue, based on a Roadmap developed earlier in the year.

The Swedish Government has been supporting the Chisinau-Comrat dialogue process since 2015, and the end of this phase of activity will be marked at an event hosted by the Ambassador of Sweden to Moldova, Signe Burgstaller, on July 11, 2018.

Gagauzia Dialogue
Dialogue platform

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NEW DIALOGUE PLATFORM WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A new information platform dedicated to the dialogue project is being launched this month on gagauzialogue.md. The website will provide all interested stakeholders with easy access to information, documents, news and analysis about the Gagauzia Dialogue Project and the work of the Gagauzia Working Group.

Until now, press releases, meeting reports and other outputs from the Gagauzia Working Group were only available on the websites of the Moldovan Parliament and People's Assembly. The launch of this channel marks the first joint communications platform for the project and a new phase of engagement with interested parties, including civil society.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Gagauzia Parliamentary Dialogue project was launched in 2015 in the context of increased openness between Chisinau and Comrat. This openness provided a new opportunity to address pressing issues between the center and the autonomy, and to consider long-term solutions to improve the functioning of the autonomy within the Republic of Moldova.

CMI, with funding from the Government of Sweden, designed a project based on a structured and sustained dialogue process, bringing together legislators from both Chisinau and Comrat to improve the functioning of the autonomy via jointly decided solutions. Following extensive consultation with stakeholders in the center and the autonomy, and a mandate from the Moldovan Parliament, the project set up an informal working group in Summer 2015 to begin the process.

As a gesture of confidence, and following increased attention from international partners to the issue, the Moldovan Parliament then initiated and established an Official Working Group involving equal numbers of representatives from the Moldovan Parliament and the People's Assembly. Now known as the 'Gagauzia Working Group', this joint decision-making mechanism is now concluding its third year of activity.

The dialogue process has been on-going in the context of increased support directed towards the autonomy, funded and delivered by the European Union delegation, UNDP, Council of Europe, OSCE Mission in Moldova, the British Embassy, and others. The project has actively participated in joint efforts between international partners over the past three years to strategically coordinate donor activities.



PROJECT APPROACH

The Gagauzia Dialogue Project is based on the premise that progress on the relationship between Comrat and Chisinau cannot be made without improving trust, social capital and capacity for dialogue between key stakeholders, and raising awareness of potential models for a well-functioning autonomy.

CMI draws on 18 years of experience in dialogue and mediation to facilitate an inclusive, intentional and step-by-step approach with the following objective:

To contribute to the effective functioning of Gagauz autonomy within the Republic of Moldova, through creating a more conducive political environment for dialogue between the center and the autonomy, and enhancing governance capacity to address institutional disputes and legislative contradictions between the center and autonomy.

The project works to strengthen these capacities in key stakeholders from the Moldovan Parliament and the People's Assembly, enabling them to come together to solve problems, build consensus and develop sustainable solutions for the functioning of the Gagauzia Autonomy.

CMI designs and facilitates the activities of the project to incorporate gender analysis and gender mainstreaming into every step of the dialogue and harmonization process.

At the invitation of the Moldovan Parliament, CMI coordinates the meetings of the Informal Dialogue Process and the Gagauzia Working Group. The project facilitates the informal process to support and inform the official one, and keeps relevant stakeholders informed of key activities within the groups. CMI also coordinates the research and analysis of the Legal Expert Group in line with the priorities of the Gagauzia Working Group.

Through this support, the members of the Working Group are able to work together within a structured framework to address current problems and reach informed joint decisions about the future functioning of the autonomy.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Gender Mainstreaming

Informal Dialogue Process (2015 - present)

- 7 Representatives from Moldovan Parliament
- 7 Representatives from People's Assembly
- 2 Representatives of Secretariats
- Informal space for dialogue to support Working Group

Gagauzia Working Group (2015 - present)

- 7 Representatives from Moldovan Parliament
- 7 Representatives from People's Assembly
- Joint Decision-making Platform

Legal Expert Group (2017 - present)

- International and local experts
- Provides technical legal support for Gagauzia Working Group

CMI (2015 - present)

- Designs and Facilitates project
- Provides access to international experts and training
- Engages political and international stakeholders

BUILDING POLITICAL CONSENSUS THROUGH DIALOGUE

CMI facilitates extensive capacity building activities for key stakeholders from the Moldovan Parliament and People's Assembly to improve knowledge of different models of autonomy and devolution, build dialogue skills, and develop social capital.

The Gagauzia Working Group used its new skills and knowledge to solve joint problems and build consensus on issues facing the autonomy

within an established dialogue framework. As a result, the Group produced a shared vision and roadmap for the future of the process. Improved institutional mechanisms for Chisinau-Comrat relations were identified as a key priority issue.

During the project period, the Moldovan Government and Parliament passed several measures related to the functioning and development of the Gagauzia autonomy, drawing on

recommendations made by decisions of the Working Group, and in the wider context of increased attention on the region in the national agenda.

Following the Redistribution of the National Road Fund and establishment of the Gagauz Agency for Regional Development, a new road has already been constructed within the autonomy, and another five projects are currently being implemented.

DIALOGUE OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Gender Mainstreaming

Gagauzia Working Group



11 Working Group Meetings



40 Joint Decisions



Common Vision and Roadmap

CMI-facilitated activities

600+ Stakeholder Meetings

25 Informal Dialogue Meetings

4 International Study Visits

8 Capacity Building Workshops

Decisions of the Moldovan Government and Parliament*



Gagauzia Development Plan



Agency for Regional Development



Redistributed National Road Fund

* drawing on recommendations of the Gagauzia Working Group

RESEARCHING MODELS OF AUTONOMY

CMI organized a series of study tours for members of the Working Group and other key stakeholders to the Aaland Islands (Finland), South Tyrol (Italy) and Wales (UK), to research European models of center-autonomy relations and decentralization mechanisms.

These visits provided all members of the group with joint knowledge and tools to shape their discussions and objectives for the dialogue process in a more pragmatic and constructive way. The experience also built and strengthened interpersonal relationships between members of the Working Group, and drew attention to the long-term nature of successful, sustainable processes to

establish functioning autonomies (e.g. 20+ years in the case of South Tyrol).

The Group was also invited to Brussels in November 2017, hosted by the European Parliament, to focus on the role of parliaments in dialogue and mediation processes, including a workshop with experts from South Tyrol and the Aaland Islands organized with support from the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities.

The Working Group used the information from these trips to inform their decision-making processes, and to craft the joint Roadmap for the harmonization process.



HARMONIZING LEGISLATION AND CLARIFYING COMPETENCIES

Adjusting national and autonomy-level legislation and improving institutional mechanisms within the framework of the 1994 Special Status Law and the Moldovan Constitution is vital to support improved functioning of the Gagauz autonomy.

To support this objective, the project created a Legal Expert Group of international and local specialists to begin mapping legislation (both central and autonomy) in four key thematic areas identified as priorities by the Gagauzia Working Group: culture, economy, health and environment.

Beginning with culture, the process identifies overlaps and discrepancies between the two parallel sets of laws, and pinpoints areas for harmonization

and delineation. To date the group has analyzed over 400 laws in the spheres of culture, health, economy and environment.

In the context of this research, the Gagauzia Working Group has proposed amendments to 10 laws in the sphere of culture and one law in the sphere of health, to better reflect the special legal status and specific needs of the Gagauzia autonomy.

The process has provided a platform for engaging with key decision-makers and stakeholders and has demonstrated the need for a systemic approach to addressing the delineation and clarification of competencies in the future, and the Legal Expert Group continues to review and map center-

autonomy mechanisms, to identify where new procedures and even mechanisms could further strengthen the relationship between Chisinau and Comrat.

In 2017, the Moldovan Parliament passed four cultural laws with amendments that took into consideration suggestions from the Legal Expert Group to better reflect the special legal status of the autonomy. The laws were already under consideration by the Moldovan Parliament when the amendments were proposed.

In Gagauzia, the People's Assembly has proposed a Pilot Monitoring Mechanism to examine laws being submitted for adoption by the Moldovan Parliament.

HARMONIZATION PROGRESS

Gender Mainstreaming

Legal Expert Group

400+ Laws Screened

Gagauzia Working Group
Revisions proposed to:


1 Health Law


10 Cultural Laws

CMI-facilitated activities

6 Visits from International Experts	1 Legal Expert Group Formed	4 Expert Analytical Reports	1 Legislation Mapping Process Designed
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Decision of the Moldovan Parliament


4 Cultural Laws passed*

Decision of the People's Assembly


Pilot Legal Monitoring mechanism proposed

* Including revisions proposed by the Gagauzia Working Group

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project "Supporting the Efficient Exercise of Gagauzia's Autonomous Powers within Moldova's Constitutional Framework" is delivered by the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and funded by the Government of Sweden. The project began in July 2015 and is funded until 2018.

CMI is an independent Finnish organisation that works to prevent and resolve conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation. Nobel Peace laureate and former President of Finland Martti Ahtisaari founded CMI in 2000. Since then, the organisation has grown to become one of the leaders in its field.

The Swedish Government has a long-term commitment for continued support to Eastern Partnership countries through its Results Strategy 2014-2020. Key priority areas include strengthened democracy, greater respect for human rights, a more fully developed state under the rule of law, and gender inclusion.

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