

The Europe and Eurasia Report



MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

April 2001

ALBANIA: THE ROAD TO PLURALISM

1990 – A New Political Reality

December 1990 marked the end of a 45-year period of dictatorship for Albania. University students, strongly supported by their professors, citizens of Tirana, writers, scholars, and well-known intellectuals, were the first to push for a democratic Albania.

Pluralist Elections in Post Communist Albania

Several elections, both local and parliamentary, and referenda have been held in the past ten years. Each election has been considered an improvement over the previous one, but none has been deemed entirely free from political influence.

The local elections of October 2000 were held in conditions that were considered a step forward both legally and administratively. The international community, including IFES, the OSCE, and USAID, provided a great deal of legal, technical, and material support. A new electoral code regulating local and parliamentary elections as well as referenda was put into place. For the first time, a computerized national voter registry was established. In spite of these steps, the political atmosphere remained very tense. Words like criminal, killer, thief, smuggler, and corruption were frequently heard during the campaign.

The Albanian Voter

Albanian politicians have often taken the perspective that legitimate elections were not possible because voters were not familiar with the concept of political competition. To support this position, they frequently referred to Albanian voters as both emotional and fanatical. However, these claims ring hollow, and the Albanian voters have proven themselves no different from voters in consolidated democracies. Through their rhetoric and their voting patterns (considerable abstentions have characterized recent elections), voters have rather effectively expressed their disappointment and discontent with the political elite. Ten years after the collapse of communism, most voters have achieved an understanding of democ-

racy and the electoral process. Albanian voters, particularly those who abstain, see themselves as poorly represented.

In Perspective

The excitement of the campaign for seats in Parliament has once again grabbed the public's attention. The 24 June elections mark an important opportunity for Albanians to prove themselves capable of facing the challenges of democracy. Irrespective of the political alternatives offered by competitors, it is critical that the elections are conducted in a free and fair manner. Dirty elections would be a blow to Albanian democracy aspirations for European integration.

The international community and political parties were highly critical of CEC's the performance following the most recent electoral cycle. Although these local elections were considered a step forward, they were overshadowed by attacks on the work of the CEC, which can be partially attributed to political party criticism and distrust. There is no doubt, however, that changes in the CEC's composure were necessary. At the beginning of 2001, the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, and one other member of the Commission resigned. The new composition of the CEC has calmed national politics. This is a significant achievement and provides a solid basis for transparent elections in Albania. Any distrust of the CEC now is strictly *politicking*.

The 2001 campaign, which officially commences on 24 May, is running more smoothly than previous elections and has exhibited greater transparency. In the past, election campaigns in Albania have been difficult. Lack of new ideas and programs is commonplace. Unfortunately, the political debate remains centralized around political personalities. The past ten years have been a test of will for the Albanian people, and a strong round of elections would be welcome.

Adriatik MEMA, IFES/Albania's On-Site Program Coordinator, authored this opinion piece. IFES appreciates the opinions of its local and DC-based staff and hopes that this venue allows a broader perspective to the challenging and rewarding work carried out around the world.

"Albanian politicians often took the perspective that legitimate elections were not possible because voters were not familiar with the concept of political competition."

Elections

Governance

Civil Society

Rule of Law

Europe and Eurasia Monthly Report Table of Contents

Europe

<i>Albania: The Road to Pluralism</i>	<i>p. 1</i>
<i>ACEEEO: Annual Executive Board Meeting.....</i>	<i>p. 2</i>
<i>Albania: Voter Registration and Elections Preparations</i>	<i>p. 3</i>
<i>Bosnia and Herzegovina: Elections Course and First Municipal Guides.....</i>	<i>p. 4</i>
<i>Macedonia: Progress on Election Law despite Political Upheaval</i>	<i>p. 6</i>
<i>Moldova: NGO Education Efforts</i>	<i>p. 6</i>
<i>Yugoslavia (Kosovo): Municipal Election Commissioner (MEC) Training Continues</i>	<i>p. 7</i>

Caucasus

<i>Armenia: Civic Educators Begin Work.....</i>	<i>p. 8</i>
<i>Azerbaijan: Limited Municipal By-Elections and Continuation of Civic Education Efforts.....</i>	<i>p. 11</i>
<i>Georgia: Drafting of Electoral Code.....</i>	<i>p. 12</i>

Central Asia Republics

<i>Kazakhstan: Student Local Government Day.....</i>	<i>p. 14</i>
<i>Kyrgyzstan: Student Civic Education Projects Gain Momentum</i>	<i>p. 14</i>
<i>Tajikistan: Conference on Political Party Development</i>	<i>p. 16</i>

EUROPE

ACEEEO

At the end of March, the heads of election management bodies from Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, and Ukraine met with representatives of the Hungarian-based ACEEEO Secretariat and IFES in Brijuni, Croatia, at the ACEEEO's Annual Executive Board meeting. During the meeting, the Secretariat reported that ACEEEO has been recommended for consultative status with the Council of Europe. Should it be accepted by a vote of the Parliamentary Assembly, this will represent an important step in the development of the Association.

Throughout April, IFES and the ACEEEO continued to discuss several issues of regional importance that were raised at the March meeting. One issue is campaign finance. This will be addressed from 14-16 October 2001 when the ACEEEO holds its 10-year Jubilee Conference, "Transparent Election Campaign Financing in the 21st Century," in Brijuni, Croatia. In keeping with the ACEEEO's special focus on Southeastern Europe, the conference will also examine recent elections in that part of the world. The ACEEEO has been involved in election-supervising and observation missions in the region, together with the OSCE and Council of Europe, for some time now. It is also developing a sub-group of ACEEEO members from Southeastern Europe. These issues will be addressed along side an exhibition of election equipment and service suppliers being organized by IFES. The exhibition will allow exhibitors to introduce the latest and most appropriate election equipment to over 100 election officials from across the region.

The Secretariat, which is actively developing its program capacity and increasing the information resources available to the members of the ACEEEO, presented its new initiatives to the Executive Board. In order to expand its ability to conduct program initiatives and work more closely with other organizations, the Association is building a database of election experts from member countries.

The Secretariat is also giving its Documentation Center a new home at the library of the Institute for Political Sciences of the Hungarian Academy for Sciences. This will allow better organization and maintenance and provide better accessibility for those interested in election-related information from the region. In order to provide more comparative information on elections, the ACEEEO is putting out a CD-Rom and expanding its collection of materials from its History of Elections Exhibition.

Finally, the ACEEEO is revising its website to make it more user-friendly and informative. For more information on these activities, please visit the website at www.aceeeo.com.

ALBANIA

Initiatives

IFES Albania is engaged in two major initiatives with the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Albania. As the lead international agency, IFES serves as co-chair of the Technical Working Group for the national Voter Registry Project. In addition, IFES provides direct financial, technical (data base, civic education, and training), and administrative assistance to the CEC. IFES staff work directly with a national counterpart in each of these areas. The second IFES initiative with the CEC is the provision of support and expertise for the administration of the national elections, which are scheduled for 24 June.

Broad-Based Voter Registration Project

The objective of the Voter Registration Project is to update and clean the national voter list data base created in 2000, undertake a one-month period of voluntary revision of the list through local election commissions, and publish a national list of voters by 10 June. During April the work of checking and updating the database against local civil registry office records was completed, and a preliminary list of voters containing nearly 2.5 million names was printed and forwarded to all 385 Local Government Election Commissions (LGECS). The public revision period began on 23 April and will conclude on June 1. To support the work of local commissions and to inform the general public of the revision procedures, IFES organized and implemented a series of local official training seminars around the country. 24 trainers delivered up to three seminars each. This marks the first time local election official training has occurred in Albania.

A training video was prepared for the seminars and the video was also shown on national television for five consecutive days beginning on 19 April. On 23 April, a national radio, television, and newspaper public education campaign got underway and will continue to end of May. Posters and leaflets have also been printed and distribution has begun. As part of the public awareness campaign, IFES and the CEC are jointly sponsoring six one-hour roundtable television programs to be shown on state television. These programs deal with the voter list revision process as well preparations for the national elections. In addition to these activities, a national toll-free information line has been installed to answer individuals' inquiries about where their name may be recorded on the list and to answer inquiries from LGECS.

The list of voters in Albania is a very controversial and political issue. Many questions have been raised about the base list from the 2000 local elections, and opposition parties have raised concerns that there are a significant number of names missing from the list. These parties are not confident that the preliminary list of voters contains all the records from civil registry offices. In response, the two major political parties

and the CEC have agreed to participate in a further verification of the list through the month of May. This will be done parallel to the public revision process. Under the party/CEC compromise, the parties, with a civil registry officer, will check the preliminary list to determine if there are records from the civil registry missing from the voter list. If missing records are found, the names will be searched through the national database, and if not found, the local election officials will undertake physical verification of each person and residence, and the name will be added to the final list. Because of the high mobility of people around the country and the tendency of those individuals not to register with the civil registry office when they move, the number of real missing names is expected to be small.

Election Preparations

The preparation of the national list of voters is a major activity in preparing for the national elections. With the CEC and international organizations in Albania, IFES has been active in a number of other election preparation activities.

With the CEC, IFES prepared a book of maps of the new 100 electoral zones. The book will be available in early May.

With the Council of Europe and the Constitutional and High Courts of Albania, IFES participated in and co-sponsored a three-day seminar and training program for senior members of the judiciary dealing with disputes arising from the Electoral Code. In addition, IFES is providing financial support to a national training program for lower level judges on similar issues and procedures for the recounting of ballots. This training program will reach 300 local judges and is being organized and delivered by the Magistrates School. In the same field, IFES has facilitated the preparation of a Commentary on the Electoral Code by the Albanian Institute for Public Law and Legal Studies. The commentary was written by the senior lawyer from the Government of Albania for the drafting of the Electoral Code last year.

The CEC has been very active in preparing for the elections. Local commissions have been formed and zone-level commissions will be formed in early May. Required election supplies have been identified and will be ordered once the Commission receives confirmation from the Government of Albania. The Commission has been hiring additional staff in preparation for the election period in the areas of field supervision and distribution of supplies. In May, IFES will work closely with CEC members and staff on the finalization of civic education and training program for the election period.

For the past several months, the possibility of a series of amendments to the electoral code has been widely speculated. As of the end of April, no changes had been introduced to the National Assembly. It is expected that some changes will be made in early May.

Impact Statement

The work of IFES with the CEC this year represents the first time that it has been possible to undertake an extensive national training program for election officials and a national civic education program on various election matters. In the past, work in these areas was spotty or primarily undertaken by international organizations. The desire of the CEC to undertake more and more of these activities on its own is a good indication of the increasing ability of the commission to develop a comprehensive strategy for election preparation and a full understanding of its responsibilities as a permanent, independent institution of the state. Similar initiatives of the CEC over the past several months in the areas of institution administrative development and financial management (in response to IFES initiatives and suggestions) have also been encouraging.

As the lead international organization in Albania dealing with the election process, IFES continues to have a close working relationship with the broader international community on a number of matters relating to politics and election administration.

BOSNIA AND HERZIGOVINA*IFES/AEOBiH Activities*First Cycle of Election Course Completed

From February through April, 27 AEOBiH members participated in the first cycle of the Elections Course designed by the IFES Curriculum Consultant Antonia Dolar for BiH election officials. The course included six modules, spread out over seven weekends. Election officials studied the evolution of international standards for elections, characteristics of various election systems, elections in BiH, election administration in BiH, responsibilities of MECs, and election planning.

On 28 April, the participants received certificates acknowledging their completion of the training, which will enable them to administer future elections in BiH in a professional manner. IFES/AEOBiH will work to ensure that the future sub-regulations of the election law require MEC members to receive this certification. AEOBiH will select from the 23 participants who have successfully completed the Election Course to be the future teachers of the course. The next cycle will begin in May in Tuzla.

Meanwhile, AEOBiH plans to supplement the Elections Course, which focuses on technical and legal issues, with training in conflict resolution. In April, the Association sent members to Canada to participate in a conflict resolution course offered by the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution. In order to provide similar training in BiH for members, nine members have completed a train-the-trainer course at the

Institute for Conflict Resolution. The future trainers studied, among other topics, the role of the third party neutral in the mediation process, basic models of negotiation, and conflict analysis.

In the new AEOBiH course, participants will learn communication, group process (for both small and large groups), negotiation, mediation, and conflict resolution skills. This training will better prepare election officials in BiH to handle sensitive political and ethnic issues in an impartial manner. Officials often need to balance the needs and demands of the public, political parties, government officials, NGOs, and the media.

AEOBiH Continues to Grow

During the past month, AEOBiH received 27 applications from prospective members. It was recommended to the Presidency that 15 applicants be admitted as regular and 12 as associate members.

AEOBiH efforts to promote its activities to political parties and officials continue to succeed in attracting attention and potential partnerships. In response to the newsletters and other promotional materials that IFES/AEOBiH sent out to political parties and mayors, the President of the BiH Federation Pensioners Party and a representative from the Civic Democratic Party (GDS) headquarters in Sarajevo telephoned AEOBiH expressing interest in the association's activities. Both parties forwarded a couple of suggestions regarding the draft election law for the BiH Parliament.

In addition, AEOBiH has initiated communication and exchange of informational materials with the Association of Judges of the BiH Federation. The legal organization has expressed interest in and willingness to establish closer cooperation with AEOBiH.

Registration and Re-Registration Efforts.

The IFES/AEOBiH Secretariat, in cooperation with the OSCE, sent letters to all 185 MECs in BiH stressing the importance of registration and re-registration of tendered ballot voters (who account for about 6% of the total number of voters who cast ballots). The letter also asked MECs to provide feedback on implemented activities.

The OSCE has complemented this action by mailing 36,500 letters to MECs and voters whose tendered ballots were rejected because their names could not be found on the voter register. The letter asked voters to visit their local voter registration centers in order to correct the problem. In a separate letter to the 24 MECs from the municipalities with the highest number of tendered ballot voters, the Secretariat explained the role of IFES/AEOBiH in the voter registration and re-registration process and asked the MECs to submit their action plans for this process.

Civic Education Activities

Citizens' Guides

In April, IFES presented Zakir Pasalic, the Mayor of Zenica, with the first copy of the Citizens Guide to Zenica. He was quite impressed and asked for additional copies including some in English for foreign guests. The IFES civic education team will be distributing these guides to Zenica local community leaders, NGOs, municipal council members, high school teachers, the library, citizens and groups having a need to understand their local government. The team will also seek to identify groups taking the initiative to seek greater accountability from their officials.

The Visegrad guide has also been completed, and was distributed to members of the Visegrad assembly. All other IFES teams are now engaged in drafting guides for their respective areas. The IFES teams are currently finalizing guides for Doboj, Breza, Buzim, Bihac, and several other municipalities. The citizens' guides provide a complete listing of public agencies and officials, describing the responsibilities of each. The Zenica guide also includes an organizational chart for the municipal government.

GAINS

Despite the current turbulence resulting from Croatian attempts to establish a separate government, progress on GAINs continues to be made. For example, a GAIN in Teslic was completed that resulted in the town's mayor agreeing to install both streetlights and speed bumps in the downtown area.

An IFES civic education team opened a new GAIN in Doboj to deal with a poor quality wooden bridge on the border of two local communities, Stanovi and Grabovica. It is of great interest for both LCs, since it connects them with the main road from Doboj to Banja Luka. IFES trainers helped organize a meeting between representatives of these LCs, at which the representatives agreed to start working on a common initiative.

Meanwhile, another civic education team completed a GAIN in Derventa town where citizens wanted to constitute an urban local community (LC) that was supposed to exist but had never been established. The trainers supported the initiative and, after a few meetings, the initiative committee asked municipal officials for assistance in the matter. As a result, the

relevant municipal department prepared the necessary LC statute. After a few weeks, LC residents held a "zbor gradjana" (citizens meeting), elected the council and constituted the LC.

Several citizen groups previously aided by IFES trainers have recently employed the skills IFES imparted to them and initiated requests for municipal improvements without IFES assistance. For example, in Bobare, the LC assembly submitted a request to the municipal authorities in January for an improved road. Ten days ago they received the material and this improvement is finalized. Now this group is submitting a second request for improving a road in a second village, Drincici. This second initiative is also without IFES assistance.

IFES civic education activities from previous months continue to bring praise. On 29 March, IFES representatives held a meeting with the mayor and head of finance of Drvar

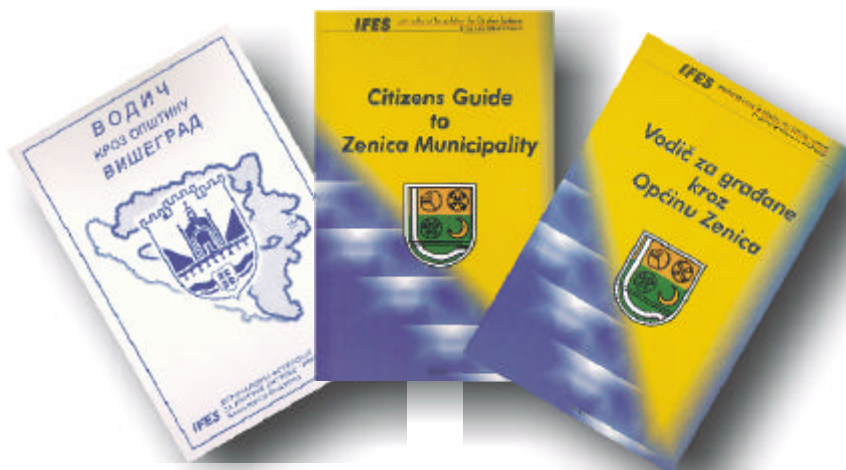
to follow up on the 19 March meeting at which the mayors of Drvar and Bihac came to an agreement with each other and the electricity company regarding the towns' power supply system. The mayor of Drvar once more expressed his satisfaction with the constructive meeting held on 19 March. That meeting earned mention on BiH TV this

week and some IFES personnel were recognized. Unfortunately, little progress has been made on the electricity GAIN in April due to political turmoil in both cantons.

Impact Summary

Through the provision of extensive education and professional development experiences for BiH election officials, IFES/AEOBiH is making a significant contribution to the nationalization of election administration. Through the Election Course and election observation missions, AEOBiH members will gain the skills and knowledge needed to manage elections in a professional manner that meets international standards.

IFES civic education activities continue to make strides in improving municipal life and the responsiveness of local officials to their constituents. In particular, the initiatives taken by BiH citizens without IFES assistance clearly reveal that the encouragement and skills shared by IFES trainers have yielded results.



MACEDONIA

Political Update

Throughout most of April, the political situation in Macedonia appeared to have improved. The violence of late February and March had ended, political party dialogue had begun, and there were concrete moves toward a broad-based coalition government. During the last weekend of the month, however, eight members of the Macedonian security forces were killed in an ambush near Tetevo. The ethnic Albanian National Liberation Army claimed responsibility. This was the single worst incidence of violence since the beginning of the current crisis, and few would have predicted it. As the month came to its convulsive end, angry mobs set fire to Albanian businesses in Bitola. Violence against Albanians was also reported in Skopje and elsewhere. There were signs that the center may not hold for much longer.

Prior to the violence, the moves toward what is known as the "Wider Coalition" government were accompanied by calls for early elections. Depending on timing, early elections would have a significant impact on electoral reform. No decisions had been reached by the end of the month.

Review and Analysis of Electoral Laws

The Working Group on Electoral Reform held four meetings in April. During the month, it completed its initial drafts of the Law on Recording Voters and the Voter ID Card and the Law on Election of Members of Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. The drafts were sent to registered political parties in Macedonia, along with requests to submit written comments.

The next steps in the process will be to assemble and review the written comments submitted by the political parties and to schedule public discussions of the draft laws in early June. IFES has been asked to help the Working Group set up the public discussions.

Impact Statement

Current efforts at electoral reform have been taking place amidst maneuvering over a coalition government and the upsurge in violence. Understandably, more attention is being paid to the immediate crisis. There is little doubt, however, that an improved legal and administrative framework for elections will be critical for the future of Macedonia.

MOLDOVA

IFES & Parliament

IFES and the Juridic Direction of Parliament sponsored a roundtable on 12 April to discuss legislative efforts to amend the Electoral Code. The amendments are aimed at simplifying the candidate registration process.

Women In Politics Seminar

On 18 April, IFES and ABA-CEELI sponsored a roundtable to discuss the upcoming Women In Politics Seminar. In all, 11 women participated: three former deputies, one UNDP officer, and seven representatives of NGOs from Chisinau and elsewhere in Moldova. The meeting generated a lot of excitement for the seminar, which is to be held on 6 June.

Supporting NGOs

On 6 April, IFES/Moldova, the Ministry of Justice, and the Social Investment Fund organized another seminar on "Public Benefit Status" in Soroca Judet. This was the 7th of a total of 8 seminars aimed at guiding NGOs seeking public benefit status. Approximately 90 representatives of registered and unregistered NGOs, mayors, and other public officers attended the seminar. Participants were instructed on how local NGOs are registered, the process of public benefit certification, the importance of organizational transparency, and the benefits of establishing partnerships between public administration bodies and NGOs. The final seminar will be conducted on 15 May.

On 10 and 11 April, Senior Program Coordinator Igor Botan attended Certification Commission sessions. Applications for certification submitted by 20 domestic NGOs were examined. For the first time, NGOs seeking public benefit status used the annual activity and financial reports developed with the support of IFES/Moldova.

Civic Voice

In April, IFES/Moldova published *Civic Voice Digest*. The digest is a compilation of the most popular articles featured in *Civic Voice* newsletter over the past 5 years. Also this month, issue #35 of *Civic Voice* newsletter was produced. The issue features interviews with Dumitru Diacov, Chairman of the Democratic Party, and Rumen Valchev, Consultant for the Council of Europe. On 17 April, Radio Free Europe and the BBC reported on the latest issue of the *Civic Voice* newsletter and briefly presented a number of the publication's interviews and articles.

Electoral School

In April, IFES/Moldova organized 4 sessions of the Electoral School for youth members of Moldova's political parties. The lectures were dedicated to the topics of political doctrine, human resource policy, the makeup of the new Government, and the latest developments in Moldovan political life. The sessions were all well attended and participants praised their utility.

Impact Summary

This month, IFES/Moldova had the opportunity to view the product of its NGO education efforts. In attending the 10 and 11 April sessions of the Certification Commission, Senior Program Coordinator Igor Botan saw the annual activity and financial reports developed by IFES used for the first time.

IFES' work with the certification commission and members of the NGO community in Moldova is aimed at strengthening the legal and administrative frameworks that currently regulate the non-profit community.

IFES/Moldova's civic education projects were particularly active this month. Along with four sessions of the Electoral School, which seeks to cultivate the political skills of young leaders, the print version of Civic Voice was released and the first edition of the Civic Voice Digest was published. Civic Voice and Civic Voice Digest serve as a non-partisan source of information on political and social events in Moldova.

YUGOSLAVIA (KOSOVO)

MEC Training

In April, IFES continued to sponsor seminars in each region for Municipal Election Commission members in order to enhance the skills of election officials and ensure the professional management of future elections in Kosovo. From 23-27 April, Zsolt Szolnoki of the ACEEEO in Budapest led a well-received seminar on Election Planning, which allowed participants to anticipate the next election process. In each workshop, the participants broke into four workgroups. Each had to develop one of the following plans: a plan for reaching disadvantaged groups by voter education, delivery of electoral material from Field Office to Polling Stations, recruitment, selection, and training of Polling Station Committee (PSC).

At the end of April, in another successful seminar, Azemina Vukovic of the Association of Election Officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina (AEOBiH) shared BiH experiences and lessons learned related to Election Management Bodies. Seminar participants, recognizing the similarities between Kosovo's situation and recent experiences in BiH, followed Vukovic's discussion with enthusiasm. She focused on her country's experience with the international community's withdrawal from election organization, the nationalization of the electoral process, multiethnic relations, and the professional electoral organization and its role in ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections.

Conference Final Report

The final report from the conference on "The Electoral Process in Kosovo: Next Steps" will be released in May in Pristina to conference participants and other interested parties. IFES/Pristina sponsored the conference in February in cooperation with the OSCE.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN EUROPE AND EURASIA

6 June	Event: Location: Contact:	Women in Politics Seminar Chisinau, Moldova Charles Lasham Project Director, IFES/Moldova E-mail: charles@ifes.md
14-16 October	Event: Location: Contact:	ACEEEO Conference, "Transparent Election Campaign Financing in the 21 st Century" Brijuni, Croatia Nathan Van Dusen Program Assistant, IFES/Washington E-mail: nvandusen@ifes.org
19-20 October	Event: Location: Contact:	Conference, "Election Dispute Resolution: Judicial Authority and Independence" Sofia, Bulgaria Nathan Van Dusen Program Assistant, IFES/Washington E-mail: nvandusen@ifes.org

Impact Summary

The training on Electoral Management Bodies concluded this series of IFES MEC training. Following up on the MEC training that has taken place over the past three months, IFES/Pristina has begun discussions with OSCE regarding what tasks the newly trained MEC members can take on in the next election.

As a result of these talks, a task force was set up with the aim of developing a plan of action for the MECs. The taskforce has two objectives: 1) to develop a plan of action that will reflect a new job description for the MEC members and 2) to develop a model for the MEC structure likely to be integrated in the municipal administration. IFES was invited to participate in the exercise and was asked to develop a training program to prepare MEC members to carry out their new tasks for the 2001 elections.

MEC members were only appointed a month prior to the 28 October Municipal Elections and were not tasked with many activities because they lacked adequate training in the electoral process. As a result of IFES' short-term training program, the members can now be assigned many tasks related to different stages of both the registration and electoral processes. This will increase the capacity of local officials to manage elections effectively, and will aid in the transition process.

IFES is planning to meet with the MEC chairs before the end of the IFES project in May to introduce them to the new tasks that they will be responsible for during the forthcoming elections.



IFES/Armenia holds first civic education dialogue group at the Tsakadzor school in Armenia

One participant teacher stated a view IFES expects to be voiced in the future. The woman stated that “international organizations should be providing material assistance,” not civic information or a book on courts. She went on to complain about her limited income. IFES trainers responded by reiterating that the project seeks to empower people to address their own problems, especially by uniting disparate voices in unified groups.

The dialogue group concluded with the handout of the Chemonics guidebook to the court system and the brochure describing the IFES project. Twelve of the 26 participants signed contact sheets indicating they were interested in further IFES civic activities.

CAUCASUS

ARMENIA

Civic Educators Begin Work

During a 25 March through 6 April training and orientation conducted by Chief Trainer Al Decie, sixteen new IFES Armenia civic educators were trained and are now working to implement the Civic Awareness and Participation project. IFES’ new Civic Trainers began their work with a series of “Dialogue Groups,” across the country. Five of the trainers are members of IFES’ civic partner the Women’s Republican Council.

First Dialogue Group is Held in Tsakadzor

IFES-Armenia held its first dialogue group on 5 April as the two-week civic educator training was drawing to a close. It served as a model for many of the dialogue groups to follow. The event was held with 26 teachers at the Tsakadzor School and was filmed for review and analysis by the trainers later in the day. The group began with mutual introductions and a brief verbal outline of the new IFES project. Then, one of the trainers, Hayastan Stepanian, provided a briefing on the Armenian court system. The court system was diagrammed on a large piece of poster board. Stepanian, an attorney, concluded her presentation by asking, “what associations do you have with the courts?” The answers were universally negative, and included words like “distrust,” “intolerance,” or “fake system.” One group member was concerned that citizens could not take cases to the Constitutional Court.

Dialogue Groups Tailored to Regional Needs

Despite the common themes addressed by IFES’ dialogue groups, trainers have the flexibility to tailor their messages to their assigned regions and to the interests of individual groups. Therefore, much of April has been spent speaking with public officials, NGOs, media outlets, and others to determine how to make future dialogue groups more effective. Nonetheless, 32 dialogue groups were held in April and are summarized below.

Yerevan

The capital city of Armenia dominates the country and contains around a third of the nation’s population. Many of the residents live in high-rise buildings, some of which have been converted into condominiums. The training team for Yerevan consists of four rather than the usual two trainers. They include Haykaz Karapetian, Artur Aivazian, Hayastan Stepanian, and Ashot Avetisian. Stepanian and Karapetian are both attorneys.

On 19 April the first Yerevan dialogue group was held at the Center of Orthopedics, Traumatology, and Rehabilitation with 30 employees. After receiving information on IFES and the Court System in Armenia, the participants expressed an interest in learning more about their rights in light of the recent privatization of their Center, such as how they might solicit their salaries that they have not received in 6 months.

During the week of 21-27 April, three groups were organized in Yerevan; Aragats Condominium members (19 participants) and two with students of Movses Khorenatsi Univer-

sity (53 participants). In addition to the Chemonics and IFES booklets, publications on human rights and the Constitutional Court were distributed. On 27 April, a dialogue group was organized at school No. 40 where 30 teachers participated. The main topics of the discussion were human rights, the court system in Armenia, the Constitutional Court, and the Council of Justice.

Ashtarak – Aragotsotn

While Ashtarak, the capital of Aragotsotn, is a short drive from Yerevan, much of the larger region is a vast rural expanse of desolate mountains and remote villages. The trainers include Gayane Danielian, the former chairwoman of the Women's Republican Council in Ashtarak, and Radik Sharoyan.

They held a dialogue group on 12 April with the Ashtarak Press Club, discussing women's issues and the court system. The team held three more dialogue groups during the week of 21 April. The first was in Voskehat village where participants raised questions about getting loans for the reconstruction of their community church and irrigation pipelines.

Two groups were held at Karbi village at local secondary schools with a total of 40 people involved. Participants expressed interest in learning more about the educational system in Armenia, existing youth and children organizations, and democracy in schools. On 27, April IFES trainers had a dialogue group at Nerses Ashtaraketsi School with 40 participants (10 teachers, 3 parents, 1 Ashtarak city council female member, and 26 students). The participants discussed problems in secondary schools.

Abovian – Kotayk

Abovian is an industrial city close to Yerevan and the capital of the Kotayk region. Kotayk is a scenic and mountainous region that is home to the resort town of Tsakadzor and the ancient temples and churches of Garni and Geghard. The IFES trainers are Marietta Mchitarian, WRC member, and Manuk Hakobian, a former Abovian official and journalist.

The Kotayk teams' first dialogue group (after the 5 April Tsakadzor test group) was held at Orebili University on 11 April. There were 54 participants - 12 men and 42 women – and they distributed 54 publications. Another dialogue group was conducted at Hatis University on 19 April where the Court System was introduced and a discussion was held on the role of the youth in civic society. The main issues raised during that group were the limited possibilities for involvement in civic activities, finding jobs after graduation, and the accreditation process of private universities. Another group was held at Sevaberd with 16 village residents.

The IFES team also participated in an Abovian city council meeting. The main issue of the meeting was the recently adopted Law on Procurement that considerably limits the au-

thority of local communities to contract local businesses for goods and services for communities. A report on the City Council meeting is currently being distributed. [On 25 April, the trainers conducted a group at the Abovian Engineering College with 23 people (9 of whom were female) participating.]

Etchmiadzin, Armavir

Etchmiadzin is not the capital of Armavir, but it is the spiritual capital of Armenia and the headquarters of the Armenian Apostolic Church. It is a city with a strong independent streak that refused to accept an assigned new name following the break up of the Soviet Union in 1991. Armavir is in the flat and fertile Ararat valley and is full of farms and vineyards. The IFES trainers in this region are Haykanush Parsamian a lawyer, and Karen Sandurian, a former Armavir government official.

On 4 April, a dialogue group was organized in Aragats town with Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan. At the beginning, the refugees were given an opportunity to present their concerns on different issues – unemployment, transportation, privatization of their houses, irrigation problems, telephone lines, citizenship questions, and the like. IFES instructors presented books on the Court System in Armenia and explained the mechanisms of addressing certain issues through the court system.

Another group was conducted on the next day at Grigor Lusavorich University with 47 participants (teachers and students). In Medzamor, the trainers held a group with 12 city council members. On 25 April, the instructors conducted a dialogue group with the residents of Hoktember village. The participants were primarily concerned with illegal tax collection and wanted to learn more about tax legislation so they could protect their rights.

Gyumri, Shirak

Gyumri, the capital of the northwestern Shirak region, is the second largest city in Armenia. It was badly damaged in a 1988 earthquake that killed over 20,000 people and continues to affect Armenia's economic recovery. Thousands of Gyumri residents still live in "temporary" metal sheds over 12 years later. The rest of Shirak is rural and remote. The IFES team is Mkrtich Babayan and Astghik Bakhalbasian, a WRC member and teacher.

The IFES team in Shirak organized a dialogue group in the editorial office of "Kumairi" newspaper with 25 residents from the neighborhood. Another group was conducted at School No. 10 in Gyumri where 22 teachers participated. On 23 April IFES instructors organized a group at Getk village where 22 community residents participated. After the presentation of the court system in Armenia and distribution of Chemonics books, the participants raised questions concern-

ing their relations with the local self-governance authorities. On 26 April, another group was conducted at School No. 16 in Giumri. There were 18 participants who expressed interest in getting copies of the Constitution of Armenia and the Criminal Code.

Sevan, Gegarkunik

The town of Sevan sits on the shore of Lake Sevan, which is the focal point of the Gegarkunik region. Still one of the largest highland freshwater lakes in the world, Lake Sevan is shrinking at an alarming rate – the victim of water diversions for both hydroelectricity and agriculture. The remainder of the Gegarkunik is remote, poor, and home to a large number of ethnic Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan. The IFES trainers in this region are Karen Manucharian and Armenuhi Nikoghosian, the former chairwoman of the WRC program in Sevan.

Their first dialogue group was organized at a Vocational Training School in Sevan with 38 participants. After the presentation on the Court System in Armenia, the participants raised different questions, such as the rights of the conscripts in the army, students' rights and their relationship with teachers, etc. The next day a group was organized in Aghdanish village with 25 teachers and 7 students. All participants signed for future involvement in IFES groups. On 25 April, the IFES team held a dialogue group at the Central Library in Sevan. Among 22 participants, 19 were women. After the presentation and distribution of Chemonics books, the audience raised questions on Local Self-Governance, the electoral system, women's rights, and requested copies of the Constitution of Armenia.

Vanadzor, Lori

Vanadzor, the capital of the northern Lori region, is the third largest city in Armenia. Like many cities in the country, it lost most of its industrial base following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The trainers are Edgar Sargsian and Svetlana Minasian, a WRC member and former president of the Vanadzor-based Union of Businesswomen.

On 19 April, Sargsian and Minasian held a dialogue group with law students at "Mkhitar Gosh" University where a lawyer from TACIS program was invited as a guest speaker. IFES and Chemonics brochures were distributed to 22 participants. On 23 April, IFES trainers conducted three dialogue groups. They met 10 students at Mkhitar Gosh University, 19 members from the "Union of Businesswomen" branch in Spitak, and 12 community residents at Jrashen village. Participants in the groups were interested in education reforms, amendments to the electoral code, and the potential installation of waterlines for both agriculture and consumption. IFES activities were covered on a local radio station in Spitak.

On 25 April, a group was organized with 12 clients of Kamurj Microenterprise Development Fund. The next day, a group was conducted with 23 teachers of school No. 5 in Alaverdi and 7 members of "Lusastgh" benevolent organization. The participants wanted to get more information on mechanisms that will enable them to influence their elected MPs and the establishment of an ombudsmen institution. The organization requested that IFES trainers conduct another group discussion on human rights. During this reporting period, meetings with the following persons were also held.

IFES and WRC Conclude International Women's Day Events

Almost two full months of regular events focused around International Women's Day (<http://www.ifes.org/Pdf/EEMarch01.pdf>) drew to a close with an awards ceremony geared toward rewarding young people's creative talent. On 26 April, IFES and the WRC concluded their Spring women's day events at a ceremony honoring the winners of a contest for the best essay on the subject of "Women and Armenian Statehood." Organized through the Ministry of Education, this contest gave teenaged girls, in all regions of the country, the opportunity to present an essay with their thoughts on this topic. The panel was comprised of 5 teachers chosen by the Ministry. The judges read the essays without knowing the identity of the authors. The essays were judged on the following criteria: overall content, relevance to the topic, and grammar.

State Radio and a camera operator from the Ministry of Education covered the event. Around 100 people were in attendance at the awards ceremony, including all the winners and several of their teachers. IFES' Jeff Swedberg gave a speech that highlighted some of the best passages from winning essays. Following are excerpts from two essays.

Anna Sahakian addressed the difficulties women face as political activists:

"The Armenian woman has been a political activist in past centuries – such as the historical figure Tigranouhi. However, during the last 2 centuries, the Armenian woman has been forgotten as a political activist. There are numerous poems and novels depicting women as a symbol of beauty in different roles such as mother to a child, or a proud mother sending her son to the battlefield. As a political activist, however, no one has depicted the Armenian woman in that role."

Essayists Aida Sarhatian recognized that change is possible:

"Today, you have the right to elect and be elected. Slowly and with difficulty, you also have your representatives in the National Assembly and in other public offices. Your voice and role is being empowered and is in accordance with the strengthening of our nation."

There is no question that Armenians have experienced adversity in recent years. Part of this hardship is the difficult realization that women are not playing a large role in their country's leadership. A common theme throughout the contest was the idea that increased women's participation in public life would improve the overall situation of average Armenians.

Impact Statement

With all components of the Citizen's Awareness and Participation in Armenia project firmly underway, IFES's presence is being felt throughout the country. With the training of 16 civic educators, now spread across 7 regions, IFES has begun addressing everyday citizens on their rights and responsibilities in a democracy.

Thirty-two IFES dialogue groups reached out to citizens at their places of work, NGO members, and elected officials. The program is beginning with an approach that emphasizes both consistency and flexibility. All training teams are addressing the issue of the Armenian court system and distributing books that were originally prepared by Chemonics, a fellow implementer of USAID democracy programs. However, each team has the flexibility to address other issues that may arise from these dialogue groups. Several such issues have arisen and efforts are currently underway to proactively address them.

With the conclusion of the International Women's Day activities, IFES and its partner, the Women's Republican Council (WRC), have spent almost two months bringing attention to the potential of women to be real contributors to the growth of Armenian democracy. In review, IFES-WRC events enjoyed sizeable crowds, benefited from significant media attention, and encouraged the participation of women in public life. The campaign will continue to be an important and prevalent component of IFES' programs to ensure continued momentum.

AZERBAIJAN

IFES Monitors Limited Municipal By-Elections

During the two months preceding the municipal by-elections held on 27 April, IFES worked closely with the Central Election Commission and fielded two observation teams on election day to monitor the balloting process. Elections were necessary to fill 300 vacant seats in 43 districts comprising 244 municipalities. These seats had become available since the December 1999 municipal elections due to attrition of municipal members through resignations, assignments to appointed bodies, death and medical conditions, and relocations.

During the pre-election period IFES counseled the CEC to issue an official instruction to Precinct Election Commissions

to clarify the use of the mobile ballot box and to issue an official act to confirm the number of requests from citizens requiring that balloting procedure. In previous elections, international observers noted the frequent abuse of the usage of mobile voting; however, during these by-elections, mobile ballot box procedures did not raise any issues of concern.

IFES' observation teams reported that the municipal by-election process was generally satisfactory and demonstrated noticeable improvement toward meeting international standards. This was not the case with the Parliamentary elections held in November 2000. Only in Garaghaj municipality in the region of Sabirabad were the election results cancelled due to election fraud perpetrated by candidates' supporters and agents.

No major irregularities were observed by IFES in the regions of Sabunchu and Azizbeyov, where IFES conducted election observation in eight polling stations. Two observation teams from the US Embassy Baku coordinated with IFES and reported similar findings. While voter turnout appeared low, official figures reported an initial nationwide turnout of 44.77%. This figure was later adjusted to a slightly lower 46.32%. In areas where IFES and the US Embassy had monitoring teams the estimated turnout was in the 25% range.

Of concern to IFES was the frequency of unsanctioned proxy voting during which male family members were given extra ballots to vote for non-present family members at the polling stations and family voting that occurred when male members cast ballots on behalf of their relatives. These acts were carried out in the presence of observers without any apparent understanding that family and proxy voting are illegal according to the law. IFES believes that this situation can be remedied by more thorough training of PEC members by the Central Election Commission in the future and focused voter education campaigns to inform the electorate about voting procedures.

Official Municipal By-Election Results By Party Affiliation

Non-partisans	183
New Azerbaijan Party (ruling party)	102
Musavat	3
Motherland Party	3
ANIP	2
Popular Front Party	2
Peoples Solidarity Party	1
Azerbaijan Democratic Entrepreneurs	1
Social Welfare party	1
Alliance for the Sake of Azerbaijan	1
<i>Total Number of Municipal Seats Filled</i>	<i>299</i>

Non-Partisan and Yeni Azerbaijan Candidates Gain Seats

During the limited by-elections, IFES noted the high number of nonpartisan registered candidates who stood for elections and then subsequently won seats on municipal councils. Of the 872 candidates registered for the elections by the CEC the inordinately high number of 583 were nonpartisans, whereas only 249 were officially designated as ruling party candidates, and the remaining 50 candidates were drawn from opposition parties. It remains to be seen if these newly-elected nonpartisan municipal members are truly independent of political party affiliations.

Although elections are not slated in the country for another two years, IFES will continue to assist the permanent Central Election Commission with professional development of key senior staff particularly in the international relations department and legal department during this respite from active elections operations.

USAID Local Governance Advisor Visits Azerbaijan

In anticipation of the conduct of municipal by-elections, USAID/Caucasus Local Governance Advisor, Joe Taggart, visited Azerbaijan from 23 to 28 April. Taggart recently joined the Mission to provide managerial oversight of USAID-funded local governance projects in both Azerbaijan and Georgia. His trip allowed him the opportunity to observe the impact of IFES' work in the local governance area over the past year.

At Taggart's request, IFES organized a tour of key municipalities in Baku and the regions and arranged protocol meetings with members of Parliament responsible for municipal development and with the Head of the Government of Azerbaijan Ministry of Justice Methodology Institute for Support of Municipalities. Taggart was favorably impressed with the relatively progressive nature of the legal framework for municipalities in Azerbaijan in comparison to the limited legislation currently passed in Georgia concerning local self-government.

Local Democracy Civic Education Project in Municipalities

In April, IFES initiated Phase Two of its municipal civic education project that seeks to inform citizens about the function and responsibilities of municipalities. Civic Education Consultant, Catherine Barnes, arrived in Baku at mid-month and will remain in Baku through the middle of June to implement this dynamic project.

Phase One of the municipal civic education project was implemented last summer in 65 municipalities across the country. Four of the original six IFES trained Azeri civic education trainers have returned to participate in the Phase Two project. Two new trainers will receive training from IFES and be added to the teams that will begin outreach to municipal communities.

US Embassy Requests IFES to Brief Visiting Delegation of Defense Attaches

On 25 April, IFES/Azerbaijan Project Manager Elsie Chang was invited by the American Embassy Baku to provide an hour-long electoral reform briefing to a group of eight US military defense attaches visiting from the Marshall Centre in Germany prior to their deployment in various Central and Eastern European countries. IFES was the only outside organization that briefed the group during their two-day stay in Baku.

Impact Summary

Technical assistance was provided to the CEC by IFES during the pre-election period for limited municipal elections held at the end of April. IFES continues to engage key Government of Azerbaijan municipal leaders and elected municipal members to assist with the advancement of local democracy and self-government. To better inform the citizens of Azerbaijan about the role of municipalities, IFES has commenced Phase Two of its civic education program, which will entail the deployment of three teams of two Azeri trainers to meet directly with municipal communities in select regions of the country.

GEORGIA

IFES Supports Election Code Development

In anticipation of local council elections later this year, IFES continues to provide technical assistance to the Inter-Faction Parliamentary Working Group (PWG) and the NGO community (NGOC) in the drafting of a unified election code. Under a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding, IFES is supporting a collaborative drafting process that seeks to include a broader spectrum of views in the election legislation drafting process.

The drafting of the general provisions section of the code is nearing completion and this draft section is in the process of being reviewed by the drafting lawyers representing the PWG, CNGO, and CEC. This review process will ensure that recommendations from the conference and any progressive consultations with the working group and other interested parties have been considered and incorporated into the draft where appropriate. The draft will be released for public comment after this process has been completed. It is anticipated that the draft will be release in late May.

During the past month, IFES held workshops and meetings involving a variety of election stakeholders. Among the groups that IFES convened to discuss the practical implications of reform to the legislative base of election were civic organizations, representatives of the State Chancellery, members of the CEC, and representatives of numerous political parties, including those not presently represented in Parliament. Among the issues discussed during these sessions

were registration requirements for candidates and parties, the composition and responsibilities of election commissions, rights of observers and party representatives, and various security and transparency mechanisms to imbue the election process with increased integrity.

The Parliament has requested that the drafting of the unified election code be completed by the end of May to ensure there is sufficient time for adoption and implementation of the code in time for the Sakrebulo (local council) elections now expected to be held in either October or November of this year.



IFES Facilitates Civic Education Roundtable in Imereti

On 19 April, IFES sponsored and participated in the second in a series of roundtable discussions on local governance issues in the Imereti region. The discussion theme was "Corruption and How Citizens Can Be Active Against Corruption." There were 40 participants in the discussion group, drawn from Sakrebulo members, NGOs, and community groups within the Kutaisi and Tkibuli areas with expertise being provided by Dato Upusashvili, formerly of the Anti Corruption Commission, and Lynete Andresen, American Bar Association (Kutaisi).

Maya Gogoladze, IFES Civic Education Coordinator, once again acted as the facilitator for the discussion. The main focus of the discussion was on ways and mechanisms that citizens can use to ensure the effective implementation of the anti-corruption program. An unexpected and very pleasing outcome of this discussion group was that the citizen's from Tkibuli requested guidance and assistance in forming an 'Active Citizens' group of their own.

Preparations Underway for Teachers Workshop

IFES has begun preparations for a teacher's workshop, "Civic Education in Schools," to be held 11-13 May in Likani. Participants will include teachers and local education administrators from Borjomi, Akhalstikhe, Khashuri, Kutaisi, and Telavi. IFES has had several meetings and discussions with education administration bodies in these areas to ensure they are informed and support the project.

Organizations who have been invited and agreed to partner with IFES in this workshop are representatives from the Open Society Georgia Teacher Training Program and Representa-

During April consultations on the unified election code, IFES/Georgia held a meeting with drafting lawyers and parties not represented in the Parliament

tives from the English Teachers Association of Georgia who are working with the University of Iowa and the Georgian Education Ministry to produce civics texts for Georgian schools. Peace Corps have agreed to participate at an informal level, with their coordinator providing a brief overview of Peace Corps' activities in Georgia and also taking part in a joint lunch on 12 March to allow the volunteers and teachers to meet each other.

IFES Updates CEC Website

During April, work on the review and update of the CEC web site and the development of an intranet for CEC staff continued to progress. The development of a database managed system for updates will enable future updates to be undertaken in a more timely fashion and thus provide election administrators, political parties, and voters with relevant information on the election system and all election-related developments. IFES is providing technical and financial support to assist the CEC to undertake this important public information project.

Impact Summary

During April, IFES continued to support further reform of the system of elections in Georgia and to encourage increased awareness of democracy and democratic governance among the citizenry. IFES continued to encourage and facilitate dialogue between the Parliamentary working group on the election code, the coalition of democracy and governance NGOs, and parties without representatives in Parliament, in order to focus on common concerns and to foster a constructive and realistic approach to the drafting of the Unified Election Code. Together with the CEC, IFES also worked to improve the transparency of the election administration authority by

supporting improvements to the CEC website to ensure that publicly available information on elections and election-related developments is timely and relevant.

CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

KAZAKHSTAN

Student Local Government Day Program

Throughout April, IFES/Kazakhstan continued preparations for IFES' Student Local Government Day (SLGD) event that has been scheduled for mid-May. IFES program staff working closely with participating local government officials in Pavlodar and Atyrau to prepare them for the event. Project Manager Bradley Austin worked with IFES/Tajikistan Civic Education Consultant Simon Jenkins to develop training manuals and associated practical exercises to prepare students, teachers, and local government officials for the event. Because the SLGD event is currently being initiated in several regions of Kazakhstan, that manuals have been adapted for use in diverse communities and organizations.

IFES has received strong support for the SLDG project from various sources. The *Maslikhat* (City Council) in Pavlodar proposed expanding the project to include more than 150 students from the first program as well as assisting IFES in identifying financial and technical support to create a Student Maslikhat for secondary schools around the city. The International County/City Management Association (ICMA) has also assisted IFES from the inception of the project and continues to provide logistical and informational support for the project. Both USAID/Atyrau and ISAR have been instrumental in providing IFES with relevant additional materials.

One of the most important goals of the SLGD program is to ensure its sustainability and independence from IFES. IFES intends the instructional manuals to serve as a primary resource for schools and government officials when conducting future SLGD events. In order to assist in this effort, IFES plans to update the manuals and translate them into Russian and Kazakh for distribution to a wider variety of schools.

Donations to Resource Centers

IFES has continued its support of regional resource centers throughout Kazakhstan with on-going contributions of civic education materials. In April, IFES distributed a variety of civic education materials through the ISAR Resource Center in Atyrau. Through the donation of such materials, IFES aims not only to distribute civic education materials, but also to make students, teachers, and constituents aware of their access to information relating to democratic development. Toward this end, IFES and ISAR have undertaken a series of press releases announcing the holdings of the ISAR Resource Center.

IFES Secures Partnerships on Textbook Development

IFES is pleased to announce that it has concluded preliminary negotiations with Exxon-Mobil of Kazakhstan to create a partnership in developing civic education textbooks for Kazakhstani secondary schools. The importance of this partnership cannot be understated, as such arrangements allow IFES' civic education project to continually expand throughout Kazakhstan. IFES will focus future efforts on cultivating similar partnerships with private organizations.

Civic Education Pilot Course Winds Down

The second-year IFES civic education course, being piloted in more than 120 schools across Kazakhstan, entered its last full month as final exams approached in May. Results from a Teacher's Review Session, held in late March, show that the course has achieved solid results, with student interest and aptitude reaching new levels. While most piloting has been done on the 11th grade level, some schools have trial tested the course on 10th and 9th graders. It is hoped that the course, which includes a student textbook and teacher's manual, will continue to expand beyond profile schools into additional numbers of secondary schools.

Impact Summary

As a result of the on-going involvement with local government officials, IFES/Kazakhstan has been able to build support and create more opportunity to develop and institute civic education programming in Kazakhstan. Working with local government officials, in conjunction with teachers and students, IFES has created a larger base of contacts and supporters for the programs. In turn, IFES will engage these supporters as future participants and mentors for civic education activities.

IFES is pleased to report that the Student Olympiad in March continues to generate good reviews from Ministry Officials and teachers with whom IFES has contacts. Since each Oblast (and/or city) held their own Olympiad to get to the IFES-sponsored Olympiad, IFES anticipates that securing a Kazakhstani organization to host the same event next year should only require IFES' technical assistance and leadership to find funding.

KYRGYZSTAN

Secondary and Tertiary Civic Ed. Projects Gain Momentum

IFES' secondary school education textbook pilot continued in 22 schools in Bishkek, Chui, and Issyk-Kul. Participating teachers were trained using a teacher's handbook developed in conjunction with the textbook with IFES consultant Vera Vigovskaya and Svetlana Melnikova leading the training under the direction of IFES/Kyrgyzstan Project Manager, Ched Flego. The book is being piloted in the Russian language this semester but will be revised and translated into Kyrgyz during the summer.

Following the conclusion of the pilot phase, a teacher's review seminar will be convened in May to evaluate the piloted material and teaching approach. Each of the 22 schools has been piloting a different chapter of the textbook, though each teacher has a complete copy of the text. The seminar will bring together pilot schoolteachers, participating students, representatives of the Ministry of Education, textbook contributors, and IFES staff members. The seminar will afford participants an opportunity to consider issues relating to the pilot textbook, teacher's manual, and interactive teaching methodologies. The Minister of Education and Culture Ms. Kamilya Sharshkeeva and IFES Vice President for Programs Juliana G. Pilon are both expected to attend the event.

During the month of April, IFES continued to develop the web-based curriculum portion of its tertiary civic education project by finalizing a strategy and draft structure for the web-designed course based on the latest civic education programs used by universities in the US. Following extensive consultations with representatives of six universities, IFES has formed a committee to research and contribute material for possible inclusion in the tertiary civic education project. The committee has decided that the proposed civic education course should be based on the successful IFES secondary school textbook because of its relevance to the curriculum plan and its adaptability to university level format. IFES proposes this interactive web-based program provide support and enrich the course, which is expected to be adopted by universities in the next academic year. The project will remain in the developmental phase for the summer.

Student Local Government Day

In April, IFES successfully conducted a Student Local Government Day event for the recently elected Student President and Ministers of Bishkek School #9, who were able to visit the City Deputy Kenesh. Prior to this visit, IFES conducted a small poll among the students to determine the question or problem they most wanted to address during the following school year. Students then presented these questions and problems during their meeting with five senior staff of the City Deputy Kenesh. The officials then provided students with an opportunity to learn more information about these issues. The students were able to examine documents related to the resolution of one of the more important problems on their list; the poor quality of the water supply in their residential area. In addition, they were allowed to consider citizen complaints about the lack of a functioning heating system and propose solutions.

The students were very pleased with their day, and IFES arranged a follow up meeting with the speaker of the City Kenesh after the school summer vacation. This event was part of IFES' student-based civic-education initiative designed to give secondary school students hands-on experience in community problem-solving and interaction with the government-

tal and nongovernmental sectors in their communities. IFES is conducting the exercise parallel to a series of Student Action Committees, which also promotes student involvement in the community, as part as part of its outreach activities in the schools.

Student Activities

Through a number of activities, IFES continued to support the Kyrgyz Russian Slavonic University (KRSU) initiative to hold democratic elections for a university student representative council. IFES has contributed to student training in how to write a student organization charter and constitution. IFES further plans to help students write a manual for school committees that will include information for schoolchildren explaining school committee structures and activities. Emphasis will be placed on encouraging teachers to support students with their initiatives. The activity is part of IFES' effort to promote student councils and self-government.

IFES also assisted a small group of students with planning and training proposals for conducting elections in the new academic year. In May, IFES will host a training session for students who will form the university elections commission and precinct election commissions. The training will include information on elections procedures, codes, and the charter for the elected student council.

Impact Summary

With the support of the Institute of Education and the Minister of Education and Culture, a pilot project for a civic education democracy textbook in secondary schools in Kyrgyzstan continued in April. IFES is testing the democracy textbook in 22 schools and is pleased with the progress of the piloting based on feedback from the teachers. In addition, with input from teacher and student pilot project participants, IFES was able to rewrite the teachers' instruction manual so that it combines detailed instructions and guidelines in the use of the textbook.

In addition to the secondary civic education program, IFES continued to maintain its support for democratic elections in universities throughout Kyrgyzstan and proceeded with a tertiary civic education project. A group of professors has prepared a draft structure and established relevant content and academic standards for the university civics education course. Currently, IFES staff and the group are holding talks on how a tertiary civic education course should be modeled and what technologies and teaching methodologies should be used to strengthen and improve it.

As the school year winds down, IFES will complete some student activities such as the Student Local Government Day and Student Action Committee projects. Other efforts such as the tertiary and secondary textbook projects and student elections project will continue on past the end of the current academic year.



IFES/Washington staff members Anthony Bowyer and Maggie McDonough visit a village school near Dushanbe to promote civic education programming in Tajikistan.

ing remarks for the conference, while Ms. McDonough and Mr. Bowyer made presentations on lessons learned in promoting the role of women and youth within political parties.

Other conference attendees included OSCE Ambassador Marc Gilbert and several OSCE Field Officers, Deputy Chief of Mission of the German Embassy, Mr. Werker; Deputy Foreign Minister Sattorzoda, Majlisi Namoyandogan Deputies Yusupova, Khamidova, Babaeva, Rahimova, Samieva, Odinayev and Talbokov; members of the Majlisi Namoyandogan staff including Press Secretary Sulonov, Chairman of the CCER, Mr. Baltuyev; Am-

bassador Kalibek of Kazakhstan, and Deputy Resident Representative Usmani of the UNDP. In addition, representatives from ACTED, AED, Aga Khan Foundation, ABA/CEELI, CARE International, Counterpart, Embassy of Turkey, Embassy of US, Embassy of Russia, Embassy of India, Ministry of Education, and OSI were also in attendance. NGO partners represented were SHARQ, MODAR and Traditions and Modernity.

The conference proved a success, and resulted in the endorsement of a Protocol of Understanding that was signed by all the party representatives. The protocol outlined recommended courses of action to increase the role of women and youth within the parties.

After the conference, IFES Political Party Development Consultant Phil Griffin and IFES/Dushanbe staff member Bahridin Sharipov continued follow-on work on the Political Party Development Conference. In cooperation with Daler Amonov, Executive Director of the First Press Club of Tajikistan, Mr. Griffin and Mr. Sharipov drafted a press release on the protocol of understanding with the participants and signatories and assisted in the eventual distribution of the release.

Additionally, Sharipov met with deputies Samieva and Tolbakov for their post-conference analysis, and Mr. Griffin met with USAID Country Representative Mike Harvey, and

TAJIKISTAN

Conference on Political Party Development in Dushanbe

As previewed extensively in the March Europe and Eurasia Report, IFES conducted a political party conference on April 3–4 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The conference, entitled *Political Parties One Year After the Majlisi Oliy Elections: Expanding the Role of Women and Youth*, was attended by the following representatives of parties and movements of Tajikistan:

- Saifullo Safarov, People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan
- Muhiddin Kabiri, Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan
- Shokirjon Hakimov, Congress of People's Unity of Tajikistan
- Amniyat Abdulnazarov, Lal'i Badakhshon
- Atoev Ato, Jumbish Party
- Asliddin Sohibnazarov, Democratic Party of Tajikistan
- A. Safiulloev, Communist Party of Tajikistan
- Gulnazar Keldi, MNURT
- Rahmatillo Zoirov, Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan
- Mirhusein Nazriev, Socialist Party of Tajikistan

IFES/Washington's Scott Lansell, Director of Europe & Eurasia, Senior Program Officer Anthony C. Bowyer and Senior Program Assistant Maggie McDonough contributed to various aspects of the program. Mr. Lansell delivered open-

USAID Regional Mission Director Glenn Anders, to brief them on the conference. A similar briefing was also provided to the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for the Newly Independent States, John Beyrle.

Political Party Development

The visit of IFES/Washington staff members also provided Mr. Griffin, Mr. Bowyer, Mr. Lansell, and Ms. McDonough with an opportunity to meet with Chairman Baltuyev of the Central Commission on Elections and Referenda to discuss future potential cooperation between the CCER and IFES. Furthermore, Mr. Lansell, Mr. Bowyer, Ms. McDonough, and Mr. Griffin had an opportunity to meet deputies Talbokov, Odinayev and Khamidova of the Majlisi Namoyandogan. The delegation discussed past IFES programming involving Tajikistani parliamentarians as well as plans for future programming, including a political party study tour to the Bavarian Parliament and the Marshall Center modeled on the November 2000 Tour. This proposed tour is to take place in the early summer and would be focused on Tajik women political leaders.

SAC and SLGD Training Seminars Held

In April, IFES/Tajikistan Civic Education Consultant Greg Stephenson and Program Assistant Moukim Mallaev organized and conducted two training seminars for the Student Action Committee (SAC) and Student Local Government Day (SLGD) activities in Kurgan Teppe (13 April) and Leninski District (26 April). As a result, a total of 92 teachers and 14 government officials from Kurghan Teppe, Leninski District, and Khojand received training on their role in IFES civic education activities. These numbers are expected to grow, since not only will the teachers present the SAC and SLGD activities to their respective schools, but they also will be expected to be the trainers for next year's SAC and SLGD activities when they expand into the oblasts.

In addition to trainings, SLGD events were held in Khojand (16 April) and Kurghan Teppe (27 April). In Khojand, 11 students (9 girls, 2 boys) were selected to observe 8 different government officials on a typical workday. Among the government offices cooperating with the SLGD were the Mayor's Office, Deputy Head of Education, Head of the Ideology Department, and the Prosecutor's Office.

In Kurghan Teppe, 28 students were selected to observe 5 different government officials. Among the participating government offices were the Prosecutor's Office, Head of the Ideology Department, Department of Justice, Department of Judges, and the Head of the Education Department. The SLGD in both cities was an enormous success and was met with great enthusiasm by the government officials, the teachers, and the students.

The SLGD event in Khojand was broadcast throughout Tajikistan via television, radio, newspaper, and the Internet. All

those who participated have expressed their desire to have the SLGD continued next year and have it expanded throughout the oblasts and to include additional government officials and students.

Furthermore, Civic Education Consultant Stephenson presented the SAC and SLGD initiatives to the participants of the Conference on Political Party Development. Stephenson gave a brief overview of the goals and objectives, what has been completed, the current status, and the future of these projects. The presentation received positive feedback from the gathering not only for the content of the activities, but because these are the activities in progress and they will have a direct benefit for the young men and women in Tajikistan.

Secondary School Civic Education Curriculum Project

Significant progress has been achieved on the design of activities for an additional 8 chapters as well as mapping out the specifications of the chapter contributions. First drafts of the chapter activities will be completed and translated into Russian and Tajik in preparation for a pilot semester commencing in August 2001. In addition, preliminary discussions with UNESCO about a potential partnership resulted in a strong verbal commitment from UNESCO to fund the final production of the curriculum materials.

Impact Summary

The heavy volume of activities and meetings that took place during April signifies a marked increase of civic education and political party development programs coming into fruition. Among the events that were held after months of initial preparation were the SAC/SLGD training and the Student Local Government Day event. The SAC/SLGD training seminars prepared over 100 teachers and government officials to independently conduct the Student Action Committees and the Student Local Government Day events in their oblasts with minimal technical support from IFES.

With over 38 students and 6 government offices participating, the program was popular among its participants, who wish to participate again, and received significant media attention. The SLGD and SAC programs give students and teachers a chance to build ties with officials, along with observing and participating in the experience of local government service. Government officials benefit alike from the programs, which function as a touchstone for their constituents' needs and criticism.

The April political party conference in Dushanbe was as exciting as anticipated and IFES is extremely satisfied that it took place with little or no problems. The conference on the role of women and youth in Tajikistani politics was viewed as a complete success and concluded with a protocol of understanding being signed by all representatives of the participating political parties.



MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

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