Press release
24 November, 2013

The Civic Dialogue Series “Point of View” for Mutual Understanding and Confidence between Georgians and South Ossetians continues.

The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University in partnership with Alliance for Conflict Transformation non-profit organization held the fifteenth meeting of Georgian and South Ossetian civil society representatives on November 22-24, 2013 in Yerevan. This dialogue was a continuation of meetings held from 2008 to 2012, the first of which took place in December 2008, at the conference center of the Institute in Mason Neck, in the state of Virginia. The process “Point of View” is a continuation of informal, or peoples diplomacy after the August 2008 war.

This time, 33 participants took part in the informal meeting, including representatives of international and non-governmental organizations. All attendees participated in the meeting in their personal capacity and did not represent the interests of any organizations.

The meeting commenced with a minute of silence to honor the memory one of the active participants of Point of View meeting professor George Khutsishvili, director of the “International center for Conflict and Negotiations”, who was one of those who laid the foundation of this process.

During the dialogue participants discussed the current situation, different initiatives and directions for restoring mutual understanding and confidence between Georgian and South Ossetian societies.

“Point of View” dialogue participants presented and discussed four main presentations on: “Social-political and social-economic situation: View from Tbilisi (Iago Kachkachishvili), since the author of the presentation could not be present in person at this meeting his report was presented by Nino Kalandarishvili; “Social-political and social-economic situation: View from Tskhinval” (Dina Alborova); “Prospects of Ossetian-Georgian relations: View from Tskhinval” (Lira Kozaeva); “Prospects of Georgian-Ossetian relations: View from Tbilisi” (Shorena Lordkipanidze).

After the these presentations four themes for small group discussions were developed:

1. Role of international organizations/education
2. Missing persons and prisoners
3. Work with youth
4. Development of Point of View web page
During the meeting representatives of the following international organizations and embassies briefed participants on their work in the region:

1. Charlotte Hunter (United Kingdom)
2. Kevin Tait (Switzerland)
3. Martha Freeman (European Union)
4. Alessandra Rognoni (EUMM)
5. Martin Rosen (Sweden)
6. Anders Lynch (USA)
7. Sara Laginder (Kvina till Kvina)
8. Albina Ovcarenco (Council of Europe)

On the final day participants heard presentations by Craig Oliphant (Saferworld) and Ryan Grist (independent expert on conflict resolution).

All reports and presentation will be available in the mid of January 2014 on http://scar.gmu.edu/south-caucasus-project/ and http://pointofviewdialogue.com.

For the last 27 years, the Institute, now the School, for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University has convened various citizen diplomacy efforts in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and in the territory of the former Soviet Union.

The participants and the organizers are grateful to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of Great Britain for their support of this meeting.

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