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 twelfth meeting of Georgian and South Ossetian civil society representatives on November 1-3, 2012 in Istanbul. This dialogue was a continuation of meetings held from 2008 to 2012, the first of which took place in December 2008, in the conference center of the Institute on Mason Neck, in the state of Virginia. The process “Point of View” is a continuation of informal or peoples diplomacy after the war in August 2008, which was catastrophic for Georgian-Ossetian relations.

This time, 27 participants took part in the informal meeting, including representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, as well as of the United Nations Development Program and the institutions of the European Union, Switzerland, the USA and Great Britain, represented in the region. All attendees participated in the meeting in their personal capacity and did not represent the interests of any organizations.

During the dialogue the participants discussed the current situation and various initiatives which are aimed at the restoration of mutual understanding and confidence between Georgian and South Ossetian societies. They also considered the long-term prospects for the “Point of View” process. Specifically, information about people who are being held in detention in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone was presented; and a report on the rehabilitation and replacement of the destroyed joint of the dam on Zonkari reservoir was presented.

During the meeting the participants discussed the following presentations: "The elections in Georgia - the new political landscape and prospects of Georgian-Ossetian relations. Georgian View" and "Socio-economic and political situation in South Ossetia. Prospects of Ossetian-Georgian relations. Ossetian View". The results of the discussion will be available in mid November 2012 on the GMU website at: http://scar.gmu.edu/south-caucasus-project/.

Participants considered the relevant work of various international and local nongovernmental organizations. These included the presentation of “Saferworld” about their work in villages that suffered from the conflict; as well as presentations by the Center for Citizen Peacebuilding at the University of California, Irvine, United Nations Development Program, the European Union Monitoring Mission, United States Department of State, as well as the British and the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
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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