Continuation of the Civic Dialogue Series “Point of View” for Mutual Understanding and Confidence between Georgians and South Ossetians

The School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University held the eleventh meeting of Georgian and South Ossetian civil society representatives on May 10 – 12, 2012 in Istanbul. This dialogue was a continuation of meetings held from 2008 to 2011, 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, 30 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 European Union structures 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, the participants discussed the state of the search efforts for missing people in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone, and considered a presentation on the rehabilitation of the Zonkari dam and the replacement of the destroyed joints.

During the meeting the participants discussed the following presentations: “The Outcomes of the South Ossetian Elections and the Prospects for Ossetian-Georgian Relations” and “The Socio-Economic and Political Situation in Georgia: Prospects for Georgian-Ossetian Relations.” The results of the discussion will be available in July 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 “Nonviolent Peace Force,” University of California in Irvine’s Center for Citizen Peacebuilding, United Nations Development Program, the delegation of the European Union in Georgia, the special representative of the European Union in the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, and the European Union Monitoring Mission.

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 United States Agency for International Development for their support of this meeting.
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