

**AGENDA AND PRESENTATIONS**  
**9:00 – 12:00 Lessons from the Georgian war**

09:00 – 09:05 Welcome/Introduction

**George Zarubin, President, EPF**

09:05 – 09:35 OPENING REMARKS

**Alexander Stubb, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

Lessons from the Georgian war

09:35 – 09:55 THE HISTORICAL REASONS BEHIND THE GEORGIAN WAR

**Arto Luukkanen, University of Helsinki**

09:55 – 10:15 BOOK PRESENTATION

**Anna-Lena Laurén, Moscow correspondent of Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE),** author of the book *There are no masters in the mountains – on the Caucasus and its people* (Vuorilla ei ole herroja – Kaukasiasta ja sen kansoista, I bergen finns inga herrar – om Kaukasien och dess folk)

10:30 – 11:00 GEORGIA'S PERSPECTIVE

**David Rakviashvili, Deputy State Minister for Reintegration of Georgia**

11:00 – 11:30 PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Moderated by: **Mikko Palonkorpi, Researcher, Aleksanteri Institute**

David Rakviashvili, Deputy State Minister of Reintegration

Arto Luukkanen, University of Helsinki

Anna-Lena Laurén, Journalist, author of the book

Susanna Niinivaara, Journalist, Helsingin Sanomat

**12:00 – 17:30 – EPF's Seminar The Crisis of Independent Media in the South Caucasus**

An independent, vibrant and critical media is essential for the transitional democracies in post-Soviet states to shape public opinion, keep citizens informed and hold local governments accountable. In Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan an independent media additionally can and must play an important role in promoting understanding and tolerance among the nations in the region and create ties over national boundaries. Aspiration to Europe requires adherence to the European standards of journalism, which guarantee media diversity and freedom.

In the countries of the South Caucasus, government influence on the media, including overt and covert censorship, on-going, unresolved conflicts, political affiliations and lack of professionalism of both central and regional media outlets, further limits the spectrum of

viewpoints that have access to the Mass Media. In addition, the situation highlights the contradiction of local governments agreeing to EU/CoE standards while not following through on their actual implementation.

Legitimate questions remain about media rights, performance and professionalism, and the role of public communications practitioners in shaping public perception. What could the international community do to improve the situation? What is the role of civil society in promoting independent media and engaging citizens in civic activism through the free flow of unbiased information?

This seminar will bring together practitioners in the areas of media and development to discuss these issues and ways to strengthen participatory democracy by investigating and exposing public relations spin and propaganda.

12:00 – 13:30 LUNCH AND ADDRESS

**Mr. Harri Kämäräinen, Deputy Director, Unit for Eastern Europe and Central Asia  
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**

13:45 – 14:00 OPENING REMARKS

**George Zarubin, President, Eurasia Partnership Foundation  
Dr. Anna-Maria Salmi, Head of Development, the Aleksanteri Institute**

14:00 – 15:45 MEDIA PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES

The effective functioning of any democratic system of government depends on a two-way flow of information between the government and the people. Unfortunately, in the South Caucasus where conflicts remain unresolved and governments maintain a wartime mentality, the media remains in crisis. Media outlets are politicized and controlled by governments, leading to a lack of alternative points of views. This session will look at the public perceptions, recent developments and trends in the field of media rights and access to information in the countries of the South Caucasus.

Moderated by: **George Zarubin, President, EPF**

**Hans Gutbrod, CRRC Director, EPF**

Public perception of major trends in the media over the last two years in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

**Levon Barseghyan, Asparez Journalists' Club, Armenia**

What are the issues affecting the implementation of Armenia's freedom of information law?

**Khadija Ismailova, Radio Liberty Azerbaijan**

Media under the government's control

**Lia Chakhunashvili, Dean of Caucasus School of Media at Caucasus University, (Georgia)**  
Georgian media at present – major challenges and achievements

Discussion

16:00 – 17:30 IDENTIFYING REAL & PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Pervasive, widespread bias often appearing in the media in the South Caucasus contravenes the standards of journalism. The direction and degree of media bias in various countries is widely disputed, although its causes are both practical and theoretical. This session will focus on how to prevent media bias and what role civil society organizations play in it. Investigative journalism, as a civic watchdog tool and a component of the Council of Europe's standards, as well as the mechanisms for protection of journalists will also be discussed.

Moderated by: **Greg Simons, Uppsala University, Sweden**

**Shain Abasov, IREX Azerbaijan**

What are the threats to journalists and how can they be redressed?

**Ketevan Vashakidze, Georgia Country Director, EPF**

Strengthening the role of media, as a watchdog institution

**Boris Navasardyan Yerevan Press Club, EPF's Grantee**

EPF's Media Bias program. Investigative Journalism and Security of Journalists in Armenia