

Working Meeting with Journalists on HPP Constructions in Georgia

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On April 25, EWMI ACCESS partner organizations and members of the newly-established **Green Advocacy Platform** – Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center (EMC), Georgian Young Lawyers' Association (GYLA) and Green Alternative held a meeting with journalists to discuss challenges posed by the construction of hydro power plants (HPPs) in Georgia. The interest in these issues greatly increased among journalists and society after the clash between local population of Pankisi and police over the construction of HPP, which broke out several days before the meeting.

Issues discussed at the meeting included: shortcomings of the energy policy in Georgia; decision-making procedures and regulations concerning the construction of HPPs; transparency of decision-making process and opportunities for citizen engagement in it; conflicts of interest and risks of corruption; impact of HPP constructions on environment and local population; court disputes about planned and ongoing HPP constructions in Pankisi, Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti regions; assessments of Georgia's energy policy by international organizations, etc.

Since last year, EMC, GYLA and Green Alternative, with the support from EWMI ACCESS, have been carrying out an intensive work to protect the rights of population in Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti and Zemo Svaneti regions. The construction of HPPs was identified as one of priority issues at the meetings with residents of these regions. According to locals, neither the environmental impact nor interests of local population were properly assessed and considered in the process of HPP planning and construction.

To raise awareness of these and other environmental problems, also to emphasize a close link between environmental issues and human rights protection, social and economic development and democratic processes, EMC, GYLA and Green Alternative created Green Advocacy Platform to mobilize and engage civil society in environmental advocacy. The platform is open to CSOs and citizens interested in environmental issues.













