

## COLOR REVOLUTIONS AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY IN GEORGIA AND KYRGYZSTAN

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### ABSTRACT

**T**he media of Kyrgyzstan described Georgia after the Rose Revolution of 2003 as a country that has made significant strides in economic recovery, suppressing corruption, and reform of its police and education system. The two countries in-

creased their cooperation after the Tulip Revolution of 2010 in Kyrgyzstan; today, it has taken the form of an exchange of diplomatic and political experience and youth programs. Trade turnover between the two countries is expected to top \$1.4 million.

These two Soviet successor-states, which adhere to different sociocultural and economic traditions, chose a practically identical road leading first to the presidential form of government and then to parliamentary democracies. This choice made after the color revolutions of 2003 in Georgia and 2005 and 2010 in Kyrgyzstan was suggest-

ed by the universal model of democracy that had gained popularity all over the world and was primarily a mechanism for legitimizing the power of the new people inside and outside the country. So far, parliamentary democracy in both countries has not developed enough to produce unambiguous results. It is much more important to understand how the changes were accepted and substantiated through an analysis of public discussions, discussions in the media and on the Internet, as well as in official documents, interviews, and statements by the leaders.

**KEYWORDS:** *Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, parliamentary democracy, color revolutions, Rose Revolution, Tulip Revolution, constitutional reforms, legitimation strategy.*

## *Introduction*

Georgia and the Kyrgyz Republic, which have very different sociocultural and economic traditions, opted for a practically identical road leading to the first post-Soviet parliamentary democracies. The two countries differ in population size and urbanization level. According to the 2010 figures, 53% of the Georgian population lived in cities; while the figure for Kyrgyzstan was 35%. Economic indices are even more illustrative. In 2012, per capita GDP in Georgia was \$5,900, while 9.7% lived below the poverty level; and in Kyrgyzstan, the figures were \$2,400 and 33.7%, respectively.<sup>1</sup>

In some respects, however, the two countries are very similar: in Georgia, 55.6% of the population works in agriculture, while in Kyrgyzstan this figure reaches 48% (as of 2012). In both republics, the titular ethnicities form an absolute majority: 83.8% of Georgians in Georgia (the 2002 figure) and 70.9% of Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan (the figure for 2009).<sup>2</sup>

The media in Kyrgyzstan use Georgia as an example of successful economic policy and anti-corruption efforts, as well as successful reform of the police and education. After the Rose Revolution, Georgia rose from 133rd place (which it occupied in 2004) in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of Transparency International to 51st place in 2012 (among the 176 states assessed),<sup>3</sup> while in the same period Kyrgyzstan sank from 122nd to 154th place.<sup>4</sup> In 2005, these countries shared 130th place in the same index: this means that Georgia demonstrated impressive progress, while Kyrgyzstan experienced a negative trend.

<sup>1</sup> See: *CIA World FactBook*.

<sup>2</sup> 2009 census results in Kyrgyzstan, available at [<http://www.stat.kg/stat.files/din.files/census/5010003.pdf>].

<sup>3</sup> See: CPI 2004, available at [[http://archive.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2004](http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2004)].

<sup>4</sup> See: CPI 2012, available at [<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2012/results>].

Some of the Kyrgyz media have invented the term “Georgification”<sup>5</sup> to describe the level of popularity of the Georgian political reforms in the country. Mikhail Saakashvili was the only president to attend the inauguration of President Almaz Atambaev, who won the 2011 elections and demonstrated that in Central Asia, too, power could be peacefully transferred. After the official ceremony, the Georgian president addressed the younger generation at the American Central Asian University in Russian; he described the reforms and pointed out that it is up to them to build a better future for their country.

The 2010 regime change in Kyrgyzstan increased the republics’ mutual interest; the leaders of both countries regularly met; cooperation, diplomatic and political in particular, between Georgia and Kyrgyzstan became much closer; the same applies to economic ties, while the media in Kyrgyzstan spared no effort to popularize the Georgian reforms. Some think that this interest was born by the long-standing friendship between the two leaders of the color revolutions—Roza Otunbaeva and Mikhail Saakashvili—who knew each other long before these events. In 2002-2003, Roza Otunbaeva was a special representative of the U.N. Secretary-General for the resolution of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict; earlier, in 1990, Eduard Shevardnadze helped her acquire the post of head of the Soviet delegation to UNESCO.<sup>6</sup>

Speaking on the phone immediately after the April 2010 events in Kyrgyzstan, Mikhail Saakashvili offered Roza Otunbaeva his assistance and support; it should be said that earlier he sent humanitarian aid to Kyrgyzstan and received heartfelt thanks.<sup>7</sup> The Georgian Policy and Management Consulting Group (PMCG) headed by former minister of economics (2004-2005) and finance (2005-2007) Alexi Alexishvili extended assistance to the Interim Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.<sup>8</sup> In Georgia, this company worked together with USAID to realize several sociopolitical projects expected to improve the system of local self-administration and institutional development of the parliament, as well as promote economic reforms.

In March-July 2009, the PMCG implemented a project in Kyrgyzstan, with the help of USAID and its money, designed to develop the business environment in the republic.<sup>9</sup> Some experts in Kyrgyzstan and Russia interpreted these consultations on macroeconomic reforms and anti-corruption programs as an attempt by the United States to draw the new government to its side through Georgian structures that used American money.<sup>10</sup>

On 21 September, 2011 at the New York Summit, Saakashvili and Otunbaeva discussed the political processes underway in their republics and agreed to continue the reforms and expand the youth exchange programs.<sup>11</sup> Deputies of the Jogorku Kenesh (the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic)

<sup>5</sup> “Iosif Illarionovich: ‘Gruziniifikatsia’ Kyrgyzstana: ‘khimicheskie reaktsii’ ili geopoliticheskaia mekhanika?” available at [<http://polit.kg/conference/3/113>], 12 March, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> See: “Askar Akaev: ‘Roza Otunbaevu ia vyrastil kak politika,’” available at [<http://www.nvspb.ru/tops/askar-akaev-rozu-otunbaevu-ya-vyrastil-kak-politika-43121>], 19 August, 2010.

<sup>7</sup> See: “Saakashvili pogovoril c Otunbaevoy po telefonu,” available at [<http://www.apsny.ge/2010/pol/1271616578.php>], 13 March, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> See: “Rozovaia Roza. Otunbaeva pozvala piarshchikov Saakashvili dlia ‘post-krizisnoy’ reabilitatsii oblomkov Kyrgyzstana. VP beret dengi u Rossii i otdaet ikh Gruzii!” available at [<http://www.paruskg.info/2010/05/23/25111>], 25 May, 2010.

<sup>9</sup> See: “Business Environment Improvement (BEI) Project in Kyrgyzstan,” available at [[http://www.pmcg-i.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=181&Itemid=55](http://www.pmcg-i.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=181&Itemid=55)], 20 December, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> See: “SShA nianali dlia novykh vlastey Kyrgyzstana gruzinskikh konsultantov,” available at [<http://pda.newsme.com.ua/world/483840/>]; “Rozovaia Roza. Otunbaeva pozvala piarshchikov Saakashvili dlia ‘post-krizisnoy’ reabilitatsii oblomkov Kyrgyzstana. VP beret dengi u Rossii i otdaet ikh Gruzii!”; “Amerika protyanula Bishkeku ruku Gruzii,” available at [[http://www.kyrgyznews.com/readarticle.php?article\\_id=3346](http://www.kyrgyznews.com/readarticle.php?article_id=3346)], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> See: “Roza Otunbaeva i Mikhail Saakashvili dogovorilis v New Yorke sozdat ‘systemu obmena molodezhyu,’” available at [<http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1316692560>], 22 September, 2011.

visited Tbilisi; their repeated visits inspired them to initiate new visa rules and new methods of traffic control.

In 2011, the two countries set up an intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Georgian trade and economic commission to increase trade turnover and bilateral cooperation. In October 2012, David Mumladze, Ambassador of Georgia to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, announced that there were plans to create a free trade area and eliminate dual taxation between Georgia and Kyrgyzstan.<sup>12</sup> In June 2012, the Committee for International Relations of the Jogorku Kenesh rejected the plan, probably because of the republic's obligations to the CIS, to which Georgia did not belong. Moreover, since early 2012, Kyrgyzstan has been actively discussing membership in the Customs Union; this made the idea of a free trade area with Georgia less attractive for the parliament which, on the whole, is pro-Russian and pro-Kazakhstan.

Tbilisi added a consulate in Bishkek to the Georgian embassy in Astana to invigorate bilateral relations between the two countries in the form of closer diplomatic relations, high-level meetings, and wider youth programs.

## Color Revolutions and the Context of Changes

Kyrgyzstan and Georgia are often described as “laboratories” or “isles” of democracy, even though they are found in different parts of Eurasia; this is probably suggested by the promises of the democratic changes their presidents (Shevardnadze and Akaev) lavished on their nations and the rest of the world in the 1990s. Political and economic liberalization, however, together with the impoverishment of the nation's majority and corruption in the corridors of power, made the promised changes impossible.

Fascinated by the paradigm of transit, foreign actors set up numerous programs and investment projects designed to promote democratization, the largest of them being the U.S. which, from 1992 to 2010, poured \$3.37 billion into independent Georgia<sup>13</sup> making it the second largest (after Israel) recipient of American aid.

In the same period, Kyrgyzstan received \$1.22 billion; it is the third largest recipient of American aid among the post-Soviet states.<sup>14</sup>

The educational programs, which create new elites prepared to insist on consistent and protracted reforms, proved to be the most successful among all other long-term investment projects. They create active civil society strata and groups and determine the course of social changes, which, on the whole, can be described as preference-forming. As Joseph Nye states, “forty-six current and 165 former heads of government are products of U.S. higher education”<sup>15</sup>; the leaders of the color revolutions belong to the same group. Mikhail Saakashvili received a fellowship from the Edmund E. Muskie Graduate Fellowship Program at the Columbia Law School and a diploma from the International Institute of Human Rights in Strasbourg, France. Roza Otunbaeva spent many years representing the Soviet Union and Kyrgyzstan in the West. Edil Baisalov, former head of the

<sup>12</sup> [<http://www.24kg.org/economics/139392-kyrgyzstan-i-gruziya-gotovyatsya-podpisat.html>], 10 March, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> See: J. Nichol, *Georgia: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, 13 July, 2012, CRS Report for Congress, available at [[www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)], 10 November, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> See: J. Nichol, *Kyrgyzstan: Recent Developments and U.S. Interests*, 26 October, 2012, CRS Report for Congress [[www.crs.gov](http://www.crs.gov)], 10 November, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> J. Nye, *The Future of Power*, New York, 2011, p. 96.

Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society who played an important role in both revolutions, graduated from the American University in Central Asia and was involved in the U.S. exchange program in 1994-1995.

Both Shevardnadze and Akaev used foreign money to stay in power and posed as liberal-minded presidents to impress foreign actors. They did a lot to familiarize society with democratic elections, civil resistance, freedom of speech, etc.; they gave NGOs and Western programs freedom of action and, at the same time, headed corrupt authoritarian regimes.

Martin Lipset's theory of modernization helps to understand the importance of democracy and what makes it consolidated: a high level of economic development leads to a high level of education and political culture with the middle class, invariably oriented towards democratic values and playing the main role.

Both countries profited much more from globalization than their post-Soviet neighbors when it came to foreign political and economic aid. They used the available educational potential to create a critically important number of citizens determined to demand changes, even though there was no middle class in the full sense of the word. The well-educated younger generation wanted a better life, which accounted for possible and inevitable changes; the conflict could not be avoided because the ruling elite could not defuse public discontent stirred up by failed hopes.

This means that the two variables present in all political changes—social and educational assets—played an important role in the preparations for and development of the Rose and Tulip revolutions.

The age group (between 25 and 54) is the first variable: in Georgia this group accounted for 42.1% of the total population and in Kyrgyzstan for 39%. It should be said that this social-age group is the most active part of society; its educational potential makes it more receptive to liberal values than the older generation who spent the larger part of their lives in the Soviet Union.

The high level of literacy is the second variable: in Georgia the share of literate people is 99.8%, while in Kyrgyzstan it is 99.7%.<sup>16</sup>

Rivalry inside the elite (a group of people who used to work together and who parted ways for different reasons) allowed the opposition to close ranks, pool their efforts, and finally come to power.

Those who led the color revolutions had been premiers and ministers close to Shevardnadze and Akaev, who regard the new leaders as their pupils.<sup>17</sup> This also explains why the idea of lustration was not very attractive: in both countries there were no civil servants around unconnected with the old regimes.

Significantly, in Georgia it is commonly believed that the administrative experience of the ruling elite made the Saakashvili regime successful, while in Kyrgyzstan there is more or less common distrust of experienced civil servants who, allegedly, cannot modernize or change the system.<sup>18</sup>

In mid-summer 2010, all sorts of Kyrgyz NGOs and social activists set up an Ordo Kenesh as a Council of Civil Society to promote lustration and "clear" the new regime of those who served Akaev and Bakiev<sup>19</sup>; this initiative never became a law.

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<sup>16</sup> See: *CIA World FactBook info on Kyrgyzstan*, available at [<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>] and [<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kg.html>], 20 November, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> See: "Askar Akaev: 'Rožu Otunbaevu ia vyrastil kak politika'" (see also: Interview with E. Shevardnadze, 27 February, 2004, in: *"Enough!" The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia 2003*, ed. by Z. Karumidze, J.V. Wertsch, New York, 2005, pp. 30-35).

<sup>18</sup> See: "Kyrgyzstan: Initsiatyva zakonopoekta o lustratsii sobrali v ego podderzhku 300 tysiach podpisey," available at [<http://www.fergananews.com/news.php?id=16507>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>19</sup> See: "Lustratsiia v Kyrgyzstane ne proydet," available at [[http://delo.kg/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1915&catid=46:2011-05-19-19-45-19&Itemid=127](http://delo.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1915&catid=46:2011-05-19-19-45-19&Itemid=127)], 10 April, 2013.

In Kyrgyzstan, supporters of the two previous regimes were hunted down; in Georgia, anti-communist zeal produced a law on lustration (adopted by the parliament on 31 May, 2011), under which those who had worked in the Soviet special services and former Communist leaders could not fill high political posts; the same law banned Fascist and Soviet insignia.<sup>20</sup>

In Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, political transformations began after the regime change (known as color revolutions); they were similar in many respects and, at the same time, different. There is a fairly popular description of regime change as a “repertoire of non-violent, sometimes successful regime change strategies.”<sup>21</sup>

Much has been already written about color revolutions, which used the actor/structure dichotomy within the transit paradigm; others analyzed the role of the elites.<sup>22</sup> Western political scientists have shown a lot of interest in this question.

Jonathan Wheatley has identified seven factors that ensured the victory of the Rose Revolution in Georgia:

- (1) a skillful and well-motivated opposition elite with previous experience of government;
- (2) active independent media that shed light both on the activities of the opposition and on the misdeeds of the government;
- (3) several very active and politicized NGOs that played a crucial role in mobilizing the population against the authorities;
- (4) certain IOs (most notably the Soros Foundation) actively assisted the opposition either directly or indirectly through assistance to these few key NGOs;
- (5) the main foreign powers (i.e. Russia and the U.S.) were neutral or favorably inclined toward the opposition and did not interfere on the side of the government;
- (6) Shevardnadze’s government was extremely unpopular because it provided virtually nothing in terms of public goods for the population; and
- (7) finally the government was either incapable of using or unwilling to use repression to resist the wave of demonstrations that gathered strength in the days that followed the disputed elections.<sup>23</sup>

Dan Jakopovich has pointed to the decisive role of the NGOs funded by the West and the pro-Western geopolitical orientation of the new elites.<sup>24</sup>

David Lewis, on the other hand, argues that “international engagement, and Western-funded NGOs and civil society groups played a much more marginal role.”<sup>25</sup> He has underestimated, however, that the non-violent environment of regime change appeared in the 1990s with the help of the West, which poured money into NGOs, the enthusiastic recipients of Western money and support. In

<sup>20</sup> [[http://zn.ua/POLITICS/parlament\\_gruzii\\_edinoglasno\\_prinyal\\_zakon\\_o\\_lyustratsii,\\_a\\_takzhe\\_zaprete\\_fashistkoy\\_i\\_kommunistich.html](http://zn.ua/POLITICS/parlament_gruzii_edinoglasno_prinyal_zakon_o_lyustratsii,_a_takzhe_zaprete_fashistkoy_i_kommunistich.html)], 20 March, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> E. Finkel, Y. Brudny, “No More Color! Authoritarian Regimes and Color Revolutions in Eurasia,” *Democratization*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 12 February, 2012, pp. 1-14.

<sup>22</sup> See: M. Zhrebkin, “In Search of a Theoretical Approach to the Analysis of ‘Colour Revolutions’: Transition Studies and Discourse Theory,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, No. 42, 2009, pp. 199-216.

<sup>23</sup> See: J. Wheatley, *Georgia from National Awakening to Rose Revolution: Delayed Transition in the Former Soviet Union*, Athaeum Press Ltd., 2005.

<sup>24</sup> See: D. Jakopovich, “The 2003 ‘Rose Revolution’ in Georgia: A Case-Study in High-Politics and Rank-and-File Execution,” *Debatte*, Vol. 15, Issue 2, 2007, pp. 211-220.

<sup>25</sup> D. Lewis, “The Dynamics of Regime Change: Domestic and International Factors in the ‘Tulip Revolution,’” *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 27, No. 3-4, September-December 2008, pp. 265-277.

this way, civil society activists learned the lessons of the previous color revolutions and realized that they had the right to oppose power peacefully and openly. At the same time, the NGOs were not the prime movers of the color revolutions and are more aptly described as “facilitators.”<sup>26</sup>

Saakashvili, in turn, pointed out that the NGOs and youth organizations were “large number-wise, but they didn’t play too great a role. However, they did play a role in frightening the government. It was all about morality and restoring morality in the government.”<sup>27</sup>

The role of the West as an “exporter of revolutions” looks doubtful. Indeed, in the absence of favorable conditions and, at least, of a small group of people dissatisfied with the regime, none of the foreign actors could aspire to mobilize the most active part of civil society against the regime. It is equally wrong to say that the citizens of Georgia and Kyrgyzstan held their own and won without assistance from abroad.

In their study of multiple case-studies of non-violent resistance, Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan conclude: these “campaigns do not necessarily benefit from material aid from outside states, though relatively small sums of money for items including cell phones, computers, radios, fax machines, T-shirts, office space, and other items that nonviolent activists use for recruitment purposes can go a long way.”<sup>28</sup>

Mark Beissinger and some other Western authors point to a united opposition as the key element.<sup>29</sup> Donnacha Ó Beacháin, on the other hand, disagrees: “Opposition parties found it too difficult to coordinate their actions and their leaders could not agree on how best to challenge election results.”<sup>30</sup>

On the whole, the changes in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan became possible through the efforts of many actors (the opposition, NGOs, youth organizations, and foreign actors) and *a social-systemic context conducive to these changes* (the relatively free non-state opposition media, foreign aid extended on a large scale, high expectations of the people, and the elite’s inability to meet them).

The corrupt authoritarian regimes did not want real changes; they kept the people happy with promises of a better future, while the social and economic conditions, which were going from bad to worse, fanned negative sentiments. The opposition leaders relied on social networks and non-violent opposition to temporarily mobilize the people around the regime change as a common goal. Inspired by the Serbian bulldozer revolution, organizations of young people (Kmara in Georgia and Birge and Kel-Kel in Kyrgyzstan) played one of the central roles in the regime change. The media covered their activities in detail.

The opposition, which brought into the streets huge crowds with anti-government slogans and demands of resignation to protest against the election results, buried the regimes of Shevardnadze and Akaev. Previously, even before the parliamentary elections, these presidents had lost some of the information battles; by refusing to revise the election results they merely added fuel to the fire of protest, which finally removed them and brought down their regimes.

In Georgia, the people prevented provocations and avoided the use of arms. They peacefully protested for three weeks, yet foreign interference could not be avoided. In these conditions, Eduard

<sup>26</sup> St. Jones, “The Rose Revolution: A Revolution without Revolutionaries?” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 1, March 2006, p. 42.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with M. Saakashvili, 25 February, 2004, in: “Enough!” *The Rose Revolution in the Republic of Georgia 2003*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>28</sup> E. Chenoweth, M. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia University Press, 2011, p. 223.

<sup>29</sup> See: M. Beissinger, “Structure and Example of Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions,” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 2007, pp. 259-276.

<sup>30</sup> D. Ó Beacháin, “Roses and Tulips: Dynamics of Regime Change in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan,” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 25, No. 2-3, June-September 2009, pp. 199-226.

Shevardnadze was not in a position to use force against the people. Mikhail Saakashvili later recalled that on 9 November, 2003, in the very center of Zugdidi, “armed, masked gunmen fired at us, and people jumped on those gunmen and pulled off their masks. Three people were wounded, two of them in the chest, so it was dramatic.”<sup>31</sup>

In Kyrgyzstan, the opposition leaders, who brought masses of protesters to Bishkek from the countryside, could not stop the looting and plunder in 2005 or prevent the casualties in 2010 (87 died).

In Georgia, people from Tbilisi were the most active protesters; in Kyrgyzstan, the wave rose in the regions (Naryn, Jalalabad, and Osh) and later reached the capital.

The Georgian media wrote that there was a long line of cars moving toward Tbilisi; the opposition leaders described this as a “symbolic thing. The cars brought something like 5,000 people to Tbilisi, no more.”<sup>32</sup>

In both countries the interim governments were headed by women—Nino Burjanadze in Georgia and Roza Otunbaeva in Kyrgyzstan. Both countries carried out constitutional reforms and held referendums and presidential and parliamentary elections to establish parliamentary democracy.

The Rose and Tulip revolutions brought new people to power. In Georgia, the new elite headed by the president educated in the West was determined to stay in power and to reform it to “justify” what was going on. In Kyrgyzstan, the constitutional reforms of 2005 carried out by Bakiev with the only aim of restoring the Akaev regime caused a lot of discontent in the masses and, ultimately, the 2010 events.

In Ukraine, Yushchenko, who came to power through the Orange Revolution, steered the country toward a parliamentary revolution; the process was cut short by the advent to power of “pro-Russian” Yanukovich.

There is a more or less commonly accepted opinion that the reforms are initiated by the elite and are, in fact, a “top-down process.”<sup>33</sup> Transformation of the political system (from presidential to semi-presidential) and discussions of parliamentary democracy show that the Rose Revolution in Georgia and the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan were both political revolutions. Jack Goldstone, one of the greatest sociologists of our time, has offered the following definition of color revolutions: “Process of change in the institutions of a government and the principles on which they are based ... is motivated by beliefs that the principles on which the existing government is based are irremediably ineffective or unjust.”<sup>34</sup>

Time alone will show whether this design of power leads to systemic readjustments.

## Constitutional Reforms

Between 2003 and 2010, the Georgian Constitution of 1995 was repeatedly amended; the main changes transformed Georgia from a presidential into a semi-presidential republic with a much stronger parliament. On 2 November, 2003, at a referendum, 89.61% of the Georgian citizens approved the plan to cut down the number of deputies from 235 to 150; the norm came into force after the 2008 parliamentary elections.

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with M. Saakashvili, 25 February, 2004, p. 25.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>33</sup> V. Cheterian, “Georgia’s Rose Revolution: Change or Repetition? Tension between State-Building and Modernizing Projects,” *Nationalities Papers*, Vol. 36, No. 7, September 2008, pp. 689-712.

<sup>34</sup> J. Goldstone, “Revolutions,” Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, 1997, available at [www.ciaonet.org/wps/goj01/].



In December 2004, Saakashvili offered the nation several amendments, which allowed the president to appoint all members of the Constitutional Court (previously the parliament, the president, and the Supreme Court appointed *three members each*), lowered the required age for judges from 35 to 30 and the maximum term in office to 10 years,<sup>35</sup> and excluded dual citizenship for judges. On the whole, however, the new amendments shifted some of the powers from the president to the parliament and prime minister. Passed by the parliament on 15 October, 2010, the amendments will be enacted after the presidential election of October 2013.

The constitutional amendments of 2006 moved the presidential and parliamentary elections to the fall (September–November). In September 2009, the Georgian parliament adopted two more amendments, which moved the parliament to Kutaisi and the Constitutional Court to Batumi.

The process was fairly smooth because of the absolute parliamentary majority of the pro-presidential party United National Movement of Georgia and because the opposition was weak and disunited.<sup>36</sup> In June 2011, the United National Movement signed an agreement with six other parties on constitutional amendments, which would increase the number of deputies from 150 to 190 after the 2012 parliamentary elections. In December 2012, the Georgian Dream Party headed by Ivanishvili, which won the election, initiated new amendments to further trim presidential powers.

The Constitution of Kyrgyzstan adopted on 5 May, 1993 established a parliamentary-presidential form of power; very soon, however, the two power structures clashed; the referendum of 10 February, 1996 changed the form of power in the republic to presidential-parliamentary.

The amendments of 1998 and 2001 increased the number of deputies and made the Russian language another official language; the referendum of 2 February, 2003 established a one-chamber parliament of 75 members and gave the prime minister and parliament even wider powers than before.

After the Tulip Revolution, the Constitutional Assembly offered several variants of constitutional amendments (their discussion began on 9 November, 2006 and ended on 15 January, 2007). The final version—the presidential system of power and proportional representation—was offered for a referendum held on 21 October, 2007. In this way, the then President Bakiev acquired a tamed parliament; the previous amendments were annulled; and the country was returned to the 2003 Constitution.

The referendum of 27 June, 2010 held after the regime change of 2010 approved a new rendition of the Fundamental Law, which introduced a semi-presidential system. People were invited to offer their opinion about the new rendition and about extending the powers of Roza Otunbaeva (president of the interim period) to 31 December, 2011. The turnout was 65%; the amendments were approved by 90.57%.

On the one hand, the new leaders of Kyrgyzstan brought to power by the April 2010 events became legitimized; on the other, the legitimate nature of the referendum caused doubts because of the tragic events of June 2010 in the republic's south. By the time of the voting much remained unclear, which, according to experts, affected the results of the voting. Some of the people wanted stability at any cost; 35% of potential voters did not come to the polling stations (they feared provocations or probably had no documents or permanent addresses). On the whole, the atmosphere at the polling stations suggested that people expected stability and changes for the better.

At that time, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) was one of the key Western structures; it extended consultative help to Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, which were amending their constitutions, legislative systems, and Election Codes. The Commission sup-

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<sup>35</sup> See: N. Khutsidze, "Proposed Constitutional Changes Cast Controversy," *Civil Ge.*, available at [<http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=8812>], 19 January, 2005.

<sup>36</sup> [<http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2010/georgia>], 20 November, 2012.

plied reports on Georgia in 2004, 2006, and 2009; the results can be found in Opinion on Draft Amendments to the Constitution of Georgia.

In 2003, the Venice Commission offered recommendations on the Election Law; it criticized the parliamentary elections of 2 November, 2003, pointed out that democratic standards had been ignored, which caused serious violations. The ODIHR, PA, OSCE, PACE, and the European Parliament registered large-scale violations of the required standards<sup>37</sup>; their joint document of 9-10 June, 2006 said, in part, that these standards needed “significant improvement to satisfy OSCE and Council of Europe’s commitments.”<sup>38</sup>

In its document of 12 March, 2004, the Commission approved Georgia’s intention to set up a semi-presidential system, which would bring the country closer to “European practice”; the same document pointed out that the amendments empowered the president to appoint the government bypassing the parliament, which, in turn, could issue a vote of no confidence in the government.<sup>39</sup>

The document of 3-4 December, 2004 says that “in some respects the Constitution goes beyond the rights and freedoms traditionally guaranteed in the Constitution by including very detailed social, cultural and collective rights”<sup>40</sup>; the opinion issued in 2006 positively assessed the implicit nature of a “decision in favor of a semi-presidential system.”<sup>41</sup>

Later the Georgian government implemented a two-year project of reforms of the country’s electoral law supported by the OSCE mission in Georgia, the Council of Europe, and the UNDP. On 16 June, 2009, the president convened the State Constitutional Commission, which was expected to suggest constitutional amendments to be discussed nationwide; on 15-16 June, 2010, the German GTZ organized a conference in Berlin called “Constitutional Reform in Georgia.” In its 2010 report on Georgia, the Venice Commission welcomed “several important improvements and significant steps in the right direction.”<sup>42</sup>

Since 2002, the Venice Commission has been extending consultative assistance to Kyrgyzstan. Its document of 14-15 September, 2007 on the constitutional amendments introduced after the 2005 Tulip Revolution pointed out that the “negative elements of the text prevail” and “the authoritarian traditions have taken the upper hand,” while the amendments created a presidential system, which might lead in the future to a new revolution.<sup>43</sup>

The 2010 report dealing with the new Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic describes it as “a step toward improving the system of separation of powers” and “fully in line with democratic

<sup>37</sup> See: “Opinion on the Unified Election Code of Georgia as Amended on 14 August, 2003,” available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2004\)005-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2004)005-e)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>38</sup> “Joint Opinion on the Election Code of Georgia by Venice Commission and ODIHR/OSCE,” available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2006\)023-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2006)023-e)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>39</sup> See: “Opinion on the Draft Amendments to the Constitution of Georgia Adopted by the Venice Commission on 12-13 March, 2004 at its 58th Plenary Session,” available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2004\)008-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2004)008-e)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> “Joint Opinion on the Proposal on Constitutional Law on Changes and Amendments to the Constitution of Georgia Adopted by the Venice Commission on 3-4 December, 2004 at its 61th Plenary Session,” available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2005\)003-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2005)003-e)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> “Opinion on the Draft Constitutional Law of Georgia on the Amendments to the Constitution,” 15-16 December, 2006, available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2006\)040-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2006)040-e)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>42</sup> “Final Opinion on the Draft Constitutional Law on Amendments and Changes to the Constitution of Georgia,” 15-16 October, 2010, available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2010\)028-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2010)028-e)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>43</sup> See: “Opinion on the Constitutional Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic Adopted by the Commission at its 73rd Plenary Session on 14-15 December, 2007,” available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2007\)045-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2007)045-e)], 12 February, 2013.

standards”; the Interim Government and the Constitutional Assembly were praised.<sup>44</sup> This means that the Venice Commission played an important role in legitimizing the new elites of Georgia and Kyrgyzstan and in planting the norms of parliamentary democracy by extending its consultative assistance to the constitutional reforms and establishment of semi-presidential systems in both countries.

Not infrequently the new political systems set up in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia are described as parliamentary, while *de jure* they are semi-presidential. By applying to the Venice Commission for an assessment of the constitutional amendments, the revolutionary leaders were also seeking international legitimation of their power, which means that they had to accept certain changes suggested by European experts.

Everything the Venice Commission has done can easily be traced in its documents and reports on the constitutional reforms in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. These documents say, for example, that drawing closer to European standards will *a priori* improve the system. This means that the leaders of the color revolutions could refer to the Commission, which approved their efforts, and could count, therefore, on approval from the Western actors.

## Why Parliamentary Democracy?

From the very beginning Georgia and Kyrgyzstan decided to transfer more powers to their parliaments; those who did this argued that the most important political decisions should be collective in order to rule out usurpation of power and authoritarian rule as its inevitable result. The leaders of the color revolutions were convinced that presidential power should be replaced with a parliamentary republic.

There are several arguments in favor of this.

First, it is commonly accepted that the parliamentary system is much better suited to monoethnic states with *prominent regionalism*, because political parties represent the interests of all the ethnicities; this arrangement guarantees stability and the feeling of fairness of the political system, a *sine qua non* of national unity as an important factor of democracy (W. Rostow).

In both countries regionalism is fairly prominent: there are South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia and the North and the South in Kyrgyzstan; there are problems caused by inadequate ethnic representation and a somewhat lopsided gender balance in the corridors of power.

In Kyrgyzstan, for example, any political party should follow definite rules when drawing up lists of its parliamentary candidates:

- no more than 70% of persons of the same sex; men and women should be evenly distributed on the party lists and be separated by no more than three positions;
- no less than 15% of people under 35;
- no less than 15% of representatives of different ethnic groups;
- no fewer than two invalids, one of them among the first 50 candidates.

In this way, the Kyrgyz Republic demonstrates that its leaders are determined to do away with ethnic, age, gender, or any other discrimination.

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<sup>44</sup> See: “Opinion on the Draft Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic Adopted by the Venice Commission at its 83rd Plenary Session,” 4 July, 2010, available at [[http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD\(2010\)015-e](http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-AD(2010)015-e)], 12 February, 2013.

It should be said that under its Constitution (Art 70.2), no party may fill more than 65 seats irrespective of the election results. This means that no pro-presidential party can expect to dominate the parliament, while the parties represented in the parliament are encouraged to form coalitions.

## Political Actors and Their Interests

*The New Elite.* According to Arnold Wolfers, who spoke about goals as specific and tangible (possession), on the one hand, and systemic and intangible (milieu),<sup>45</sup> on the other, parliamentary democracy is a milieu goal, while the semi-presidential system is a possession goal of legitimation of the new elites.

The choice of a new system is intended to point to real changes and satisfy the possession ambitions of the regional elites. M. Burton and J. Higley have pointed out that after a political crisis, political “settlements are accomplished with considerable speed, seldom taking more than a few weeks or months; with some formal document (a signed pact, a new constitution) embodying informal and tacit understandings that have been reached.”<sup>46</sup>

Constitutional reforms appeared on the agenda because the new elite needed legitimacy; in Kyrgyzstan a referendum on the new Constitution was organized despite continued troubles in the country’s south. The President of Georgia, who relied on the parliamentary majority, hastened to amend the Constitution.

In an effort to devalue the presidential system, the new elites pointed to the first years of independence; they popularized the parliamentary system and its obvious advantages: political pluralism as a product of party rivalry; equal representation of regional interests in the parliament; and separation of powers and the checks-and-balances system as a mechanism preventing the president’s authoritarian intentions. Nothing was said about the negative sides of parliamentarism.

Omurbek Tekebaev, the main author of the 2010 Constitution of Kyrgyzstan and father of the republic’s parliamentary democracy, repeatedly stresses that the country needs a “new political culture” and a “new type of a citizen” to suit the values of parliamentary democracy; he is absolutely convinced that parliamentarism in Kyrgyzstan will develop despite the grim forecasts of the country’s Afghanistanization and the failure of the new system.<sup>47</sup>

In his interviews Almazbek Atambaev has pointed out that the country should avoid the trap of the presidential system into which Kyrgyzstan has already fallen twice<sup>48</sup> and that parliamentary elections are the only way to achieve rotation of the people in power.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> See: A. Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics*, Baltimore, 1962, pp. 73-77.

<sup>46</sup> M. Burton, J. Higley, “Political Crises and Elite Settlement,” in: *The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order*, ed. by B. Badie, Stanford University Press, 2000, pp. 55-56.

<sup>47</sup> See: “Omurbek Tekebaev: ‘Zavtra eto budet drugaia strana,’” available at [[http://www.atameken.kg/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=95:2010-09-11-09-08-40&catid=11:articles&Itemid=16](http://www.atameken.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95:2010-09-11-09-08-40&catid=11:articles&Itemid=16)]; “Omurbek Tekebaev: ‘Epokha politicheskogo radikalizma ukhodit v proshloe,’” available at [<http://www.polit.kg/newskg/209>]; “Omurbek Tekebaev: ‘Parlamentarizm v Kyrgyzstane obrechen na uspekh,’” available at [[http://www.atameken.kg/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=119:2010-10-10-11-21-22&catid=7:knovosti&Itemid=11](http://www.atameken.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=119:2010-10-10-11-21-22&catid=7:knovosti&Itemid=11)], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>48</sup> See: “Prezident Almazbek Atambaev provel press-konferentsiyu po itogam 2012 goda,” available at [[http://www.president.kg/ru/news/1351\\_prezident\\_almazbek\\_atambaev\\_provel\\_press-konferentsiyu\\_po\\_itogam\\_2012\\_goda/](http://www.president.kg/ru/news/1351_prezident_almazbek_atambaev_provel_press-konferentsiyu_po_itogam_2012_goda/)], 24 December, 2012.

<sup>49</sup> See: “Interview of President A. Atambaev to the Mir Radio and TV Company,” 11 March, 2013, available at [<http://kabar.kg/interview/full/51100>], 10 April, 2013.

Roza Otunbaeva has said that the “Kyrgyz spring of 2010 is a step toward parliamentary democracy”<sup>50</sup> and that the Kyrgyz are naturally inclined toward freedom of speech and opinion. She insists that democracy is not an alien system for the Kyrgyz<sup>51</sup> and that 2005 and 2010 were two stages in the country’s progress toward democracy.<sup>52</sup>

In Kyrgyzstan, the constitutional amendments were not discussed at the nationwide level and were quickly adopted.<sup>53</sup> The ruling elite turned to international organizations and foreign agencies such as the Venice Commission and ODIHR, as well as members of the academic community to justify introduction of the parliamentary system. The people on top made use of the discussions to push aside those who insisted on the presidential system; they were dismissed as supporters of the old compromised regimes. This outlined the field of politically correct opinions; the new leaders spoke of the parliamentary system as a gigantic step toward prosperity for all.

*Foreign actors.* Parliamentary democracy in the Soviet successor-states suited the interests of the West. It was expected that it would make the regimes more democratic through consultative assistance of the Venice Commission and ODIHR and financial support to local NGOs.

This brings into bolder relief the very different opinions about the Georgian and Kyrgyz developments in the post-Soviet and Western states. Their closest neighbors were very critical of the new systems as unsuitable for unstable traditional societies in which regionalism and kinship relations remained prominent. President of Russia Medvedev was openly doubtful of the future of parliamentary democracy in Kyrgyzstan; in his irritation he spoke of possible “catastrophic repercussions.”<sup>54</sup> This logic is very typical of those who head states threatened with disintegration; these people speak of the reforms initiated by the color revolutions as “still-born” initiatives.

Western actors, in turn, represented by EU and U.S. officials, were enthusiastic about what they saw in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. The George W. Bush Administration highly praised the Rose Revolution in Georgia and its results.

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was no less positive about the reforms in Kyrgyzstan; the Venice Commission was ready with its consultative assistance to the parliamentary reform.

Western NGOs, in turn, were prepared to help organize public discussions and roundtables about parliamentarism in both countries. At the conference held on 18-20 November, 2011 in Bishkek, which brought together delegates from 14 countries, the Olof Palme Fund (Sweden) completely approved the country’s progress toward parliamentary democracy.<sup>55</sup> In November 2012, a conference on the role of parliamentarism in conflict settlement was organized under the aegis of the UNDP<sup>56</sup>; on 15 May, 2012 several Kyrgyz NGOs set up a movement For Parliamentarism, the members of which were mainly Western-oriented leaders.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>50</sup> “Roza Otunbaeva: ‘V aprele 2010 goda nachalas “kyrgyzskaia vesna” i ona stala trendom,’” 18 November, 2011, available at [<http://www.knews.kg/ru/politics/6309/>], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>51</sup> See: “Roza Otunbaeva: ‘Vsemu svoe vremia.’ Prezident Kyrgyzstana Roza Otunbaeva dala eksliuzivnoe interview ‘Azattyk’ po sluchaiu 20-letii nezavisimosti strany,” available at [[http://rus.azattyk.org/content/kyrgyzstan\\_otunbaeva\\_president/24314468.html](http://rus.azattyk.org/content/kyrgyzstan_otunbaeva_president/24314468.html)], 1 September, 2011.

<sup>52</sup> See: “R. Otunbaeva o revolyutsiiakh i vlasti segodnia. Doklad Otunbaevoy o sobytiakh 23 marta 2011 goda i 2005 i 2010 godov,” available at [<http://www.kyrgyznews.com/news.php?readmore=5112>], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>53</sup> See: “Referendum v Kyrgyzstane,” available at [<http://www.golos-ameriki.ru/content/kyrgyzstani-citizens-2010-06-27-97277024/186153.html>], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> “Prezident Medvedev i Kyrgyzskiy parlamentarizm,” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 22 September, 2010, available at [[http://www.zpress.kg/news/news\\_only/6/22907/640.py](http://www.zpress.kg/news/news_only/6/22907/640.py)].

<sup>55</sup> See: “Kyrgyzskiy parlamentarizm glazami mirovogo soobshchestva,” Azattyk Radio, available at [<http://www.paruskg.info/2011/10/21/51347>].

<sup>56</sup> See: “Interview with Z. Kurmanov,” available at [[http://www.open.kg/ru/theme/interview/?theme\\_id=248&id=611](http://www.open.kg/ru/theme/interview/?theme_id=248&id=611)], 20 March, 2013

<sup>57</sup> See: “V Bishkeke sozdali Sovet po zashchite parlamentarizma,” available at [<http://vof.kg/?p=4746>], 10 November, 2012.

*The Opposition.* Its leaders insisted that the presidential system is a neutral one; everything depends on the personality of the president and whether he has a chance to usurp power. They also warned that the parliamentary system was fraught with parliamentary dictatorship and were convinced that the state was not ready to switch to parliamentarism because the party structure remained weak; regionalism remained prominent; the process of decision-making was unpredictable; there was no personal responsibility; the coalitions were always in crisis while political instability persisted; the population was fairly fragmented while corporate interests dominated over public interests, etc.

The leaders of the Kyrgyz opposition are trying to initiate another constitutional reform and to disband the parliament. This means that they are critical of the new government and its policy.

Adil Turdukulov insisted on new reforms after the 2011 presidential election<sup>58</sup>; in August 2012, Azimbek Beknazarov, leader of two color revolutions and head of the united opposition, suggested the same. On 23 August, 2012, the April Bayragy and Aykol Ala-Too movements organized mass rallies<sup>59</sup>; the Taza koom uchun movement followed suit on 9 September, 2012.<sup>60</sup> The protest movement was gaining momentum: arrests of the opposition leaders after the meeting of 10 October, 2012<sup>61</sup> stirred up unrest in Jalalabad in March 2013.<sup>62</sup>

The opposition, which closed ranks around the For the Disbandment of the Parliament Movement, grew more and more radical with its demands; the names of the leaders of opposition movements Alliance of Progressive Forces (Miroslav Niyazov)<sup>63</sup> and For the Salvation of Kyrgyzstan (Mukar Cholponbaev) became well known. On 13 March, 2013, the opposition convened a Kurultai.<sup>64</sup>

The media heaped the blame for opposition activities on Washington, which was allegedly displeased with the new president who did not intend to prolong the contract on the American base in the Manas airport. President Atambaev excludes this possibility; to his mind the protests were staged by the power-thirsty opposition leaders seeking revenge for their defeat in 2010.<sup>65</sup>

In Georgia, Ivanishvili and his government have been already accused of pro-Russian orientation and neglecting European values. This threatens the republic's future EU membership, 23 deputies of the Europarlament said in their very critical letter.<sup>66</sup> Speaker David Usupashvili responded with: "Do not set the regime of Saakashvili as a standard."<sup>67</sup> The EU criticized Georgia, which was "sliding backwards in terms of democracy," which caused a response in the form of a memorandum.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>58</sup> [<http://www.knews.kg/ru/society/2359/>], 12 February, 2013.

<sup>59</sup> [<http://www.knews.kg/ru/society/20673/>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>60</sup> See: "Miting za rospusk parlamenta," available at [<http://www.24kg.org/community/135915-v-stolice-kyrgyzstana-prodolzhaetsya-miting-za.html>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>61</sup> [<http://www.24kg.org/community/139158-sredi-zaderzhannyx-mitinguyushhix-za-izmenenie.html>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>62</sup> [<http://www.for.kg/news-216873-ru.html>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>63</sup> [<http://www.24kg.org/politic/147394-miroslav-niyazov-kyrgyzstan-na-polputi-k-tomu.html>]; [<http://rus.kg/news/vlast/9544-miroslav-niyazov-parlamentskaya-sistema-vedet-kyrgyzstan-k-haosu.html>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>64</sup> See: Zh. Alieva, "Iuzhnaia ugroza," available at [[http://www.dn.kz/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1050:2013-03-07-21-33-33&catid=2:2011-10-23-11-43-45&Itemid=4](http://www.dn.kz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1050:2013-03-07-21-33-33&catid=2:2011-10-23-11-43-45&Itemid=4)], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>65</sup> See: "Interview of President A. Atambaev to Radio and TV Mir Company," 11 March, 2013.

<sup>66</sup> See: "European Center-Right Party Continues Educating Georgian Leader," available at [<http://dfwatch.net/european-peoples-party-continues-educating-georgian-leader-15211>], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>67</sup> GHN News Agency, available at [[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T16945738247&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T16945738264&cisb=22\\_T16945738263&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=404368&docNo=5](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T16945738247&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T16945738264&cisb=22_T16945738263&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=404368&docNo=5)], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> See: "Georgian Government Answers to the European People's Party," available at [<http://dfwatch.net/georgian-government-answers-european-peoples-party-92855>], 10 April, 2013.

On 7 March, 2013, the Georgian parliament identified EU and NATO membership as two foreign policy priorities.<sup>69</sup>

The new government and most of the deputies demonstrate no desire to carry out the constitutional reform initiated by Saakashvili; the parliament released 3 thousand inmates from prison, 190 of them being detained for political reasons.<sup>70</sup> The parliamentary elections of 2012 showed that President Saakashvili had lost and was continuing to lose his former popularity largely due to the brutal suppression of the 2007 protests and the scandalous video film about violence in prisons.<sup>71</sup>

### *Conclusion*

The Rose Revolution and the sociopolitical processes in Georgia it set in motion made the Georgian reformers very popular with the Kyrgyz media and political establishment. In Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, the color revolutions generated the will and determination to establish parliamentary democracy; this makes the political processes in both countries very similar indeed. The semi-presidential system stems from the legitimation of the new elites inside the country and outside it; the people in power were obviously determined to carry out structural reforms.

In Georgia, the tenth anniversary of the Rose Revolution was celebrated amid the positive changes in the country's political, social, and economic life (today, for example, educated young people are invited to join the civil service and associate their future with their country). In Kyrgyzstan, no positive shifts have been registered. The reforms promised after the revolutions of 2005 and 2010 have not yet been started because the top crust lacks the necessary political will. The anti-corruption campaign has degenerated into a mechanism of struggle against those who support the opposition; the media should also be blamed for this. In the absence of real changes, Kyrgyzstan remains practically at the bottom of all the international ratings.

Legitimation of the idea of parliamentary democracy is still going on; its success depends on the ability of the leaders of the color revolutions to remain in power and preserve the results that have already been achieved; otherwise the opposition will have the chance to restore the presidential system.

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<sup>69</sup> See: "Georgian Parliament Proclaims EU/NATO Integration Foreign Policy Priority," ITAR-TASS, available at [[http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21\\_T16945738247&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29\\_T16945738264&cisb=22\\_T16945738263&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=384326&docNo=8](http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkInd=true&risb=21_T16945738247&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T16945738264&cisb=22_T16945738263&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=384326&docNo=8)], 10 April, 2013.

<sup>70</sup> See: IRIB news, available at [<http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/auth/checkbrowser.do?rand=0.735165503970945&cookieState=0&ipcounter=1&bhcp=1>], 14 January, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> See: N. Gemoklidze, "Georgia's Parliamentary Elections—Democracy in Action?" available at [<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/thebirminghambrief/items/Georgias-Parliamentary-Elections-%E2%80%93-Democracy-in-Action.aspx>], 12 April, 2013.