

Press Release

“Berghof Process”
in Nicosia, Cyprus (8. – 12. December 2006)

Since 1999 the Berghof Foundation is being engaged in the informal Georgian-Abkhaz dialogue. The workshop is part of an ongoing series of meetings on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and peace process bringing together people with government backgrounds, politicians and public figures from both sides of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. It was conducted in Nicosia, Cyprus from 8 - 12 December 2006.

The workshop in Cyprus provides both a forum for Georgian and Abkhaz participants to get first hand information about the dynamics of the Cyprus peace process and relations between the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot Community. By gaining deeper insights into the dynamics in and around Cyprus it is the goal to encourage participants to creative thinking in respect to their own complex and dynamic political situation and to provide an opportunity to discuss in an informal environment where no decisions are being taken.

Participants met with Cypriot politicians, academics, and civil activists both from the Southern and Northern part of Cyprus discussing and analyzing developments that led to the opening of check-points at the “green line”, the Kofi Annan Peace Plan for Cyprus, the separate referendum on the Annan Plan on either side of the Cyprus conflict divide, the current political developments as well as legal dynamics in dealing with the question of property right both in the North and South of the island. In addition participants gathered insights about the financial aid provided by the European Commission as well as the issue of persons that are missing since the different phases of inter-communal violence in the 1960th as well as the Coup in 1974 that lead to the Turkish invasion. Participants were free to cross from the Southern to the Northern part and vice verse and had meetings in both parts.

In addition, discussions touched upon developments in 2006 in relations between the Georgian and Abkhaz parties to the conflict. Participants reflected about dynamics that could be supportive for reaching an agreement that is based on mutual acceptance between the parties and their respective populations. Moreover, participants looked at the conditions that are restricting freedom of movement between either side engaging in an analysis of risks that would go along with an enlarged freedom of movement. Participants acknowledged that the risks under the current conditions are substantive and that they would need to be minimized to the lowest possible level in order to generate any possible development in this issue.

The workshop was characterised by a constructive exchange. It is hoped that this will contribute to a culture of dialogue and understanding between the Georgian and Abkhaz communities.

The Abkhaz participants in the workshop were Batal Tabagua, Daur Kove, Manana Gurgulia, Said Gezerdava and Diana Kerselyan. The Georgian participants were Georgi Khaindrava, Paata Zakareishvili, Shalva Pichardze, Lasha Tughushi, and Vakhtang Kolbaia. All participants took part in their individual capacity, not representing any organisation or institution.

The workshop was organised by the Berghof Foundation for Peace Support (Berlin). It was facilitated by Oliver Wolleh (Berghof Foundation), Wolfram Zunzer (Berghof Foundation) and Maria Hadjipavlou (University of Cyprus). The Team was supported by Susanne Breda (Berghof Foundation) and Mehves Beyidoglu. The workshop was funded by the German Foreign Office.