



EVALUATION OF PERFORMANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZUGDIDI IN 2022



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INTRODUCTION:

Transparency International Georgia has evaluated the performance of the City Council of the Zugdidi Municipality (hereinafter the City Council of Zugdidi) in 2022.

The report is based on the information requested from the City Council and that posted on the City Council's official website, as well as on the observations of our organization.

The study period covers the year 2022.

Transparency International Georgia has evaluated the performance of the City Council of Zugdidi twice, the [first report](#) covered the study period between November 2017 and 2019, and the [second report](#) covered the year 2020.

CHAPTER 1: MAIN FINDINGS

- During the reporting period, there was a partial improvement in the exercise of oversight function by the Zugdidi City Council over the activities of the Zugdidi City Hall and legal entities;
- The City Council has not revealed any instances of conflict of interest or misconduct in the operations of the City Hall, which includes the state procurement process;
- Zugdidi City Council conducted a total of **28** sessions, out of which **19** were extraordinary;
- Zugdidi City Council passed a total of **45** resolutions, with **30** of them being authored or initiated by Zugdidi City Hall, and the remaining **15** resolutions originating from the City Council itself;
- Among the **45** officials serving in the Zugdidi Municipality City Council, only one individual, Irakli Gogokhia, submitted a declaration with violations;
- In contrast to the previous convocation of the City Council, this time all factions in the Council had initiatives. Collectively, the factions presented a total of **59** initiatives in 2022;
- The total expenditure for the operations of the factions reached **633,443 GEL**. Out of this amount, **599,340 GEL** was allocated towards salaries, representing an increase of **350,341 GEL** compared to the corresponding figure in 2020;
- The number of female members of the City Council has increased from **7 to 14**, which is **31.1** percent of the total number of members, compared to the previous convocation;
- Out of the **14** women members of the City Council, **6** hold positions. Among them, three serve as chairpersons of commissions, one as the chairperson of a faction, and two as deputy chairpersons of a faction;
- Similar to the previous convocation, the Gender Equality Council did not conduct analyses of legal acts or provide expertise on draft legislative acts in 2022. No system has been established to monitor and evaluate the measures implemented to promote gender equality;
- The Gender Equality Council presented recommendations on the 2023 budget project, as well as condemned the violation of ethical norms towards women by the member of the City Council;
- During the reporting period, the members of the City Council were absent from the council sessions **337 times**, including **320 times** - without a valid reason;
- Among the members of the City Council, Mamuka Kurashvili, a member of the faction “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” had the highest number of absences without a valid reason, missing a total of **22** sessions. Additionally, Davit Vekua, Deputy Chairperson of the “United National Movement” faction had **17** absences, while Paata Adamia, a member of the faction, had **16** absences, ranking them among the leaders in terms of session absences;
- In 2022, there were **297** instances of absences from the City Council Commission sessions identified, including **253**- absences without a valid reason;
- Joni Jikia, Deputy Chairman of the “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” faction, holds the highest number of missed commission sessions among the city council members without a valid reason, totaling **26**. Tazo Patsatsia, deputy chairman of the same faction, has recorded

21 absences without a valid reason from the commission sessions. Additionally, Davit Vekua, deputy chairman of the “United National Movement” faction has accumulated 18 absences, placing them among the leaders in terms of absences without valid reason from the commission sessions;

- During the reporting period, among the **45** members of the Zugdidi City Council, 10 members refrained from exercising their right to speak, for comparison, the previous convocation of the City Council had **25** silent members in 2020. **32** members did not present their reports during the council sessions;
- A total of **1,547,553 GEL** was spent on the activities of the Zugdidi City Council in 2022. Out of this amount, **1,302,230 GEL** was allocated for salaries, **147,676 GEL** was dedicated to reimbursing expenses incurred by City Council members, **91,703 GEL** was spent on fuel expenses, **4,757 GEL** was used for telephone communication, and 1,187 GEL was spent on business trips;
- Unlike the previous convocation of the City Council, the current City Council of Zugdidi does not utilize cars owned by the municipality;
- The fuel limit for the chairman of the City Council has been reduced from 700 to 400 liters, while for the deputies, it has been decreased from 400 to 350 liters.
- In 2022, the City Council spent a total of **27.6 tons (27,675 liters)** of fuel, for comparison: the similar rate in 2020 was **42.2 tons (42,257 liters)**;
- The fuel consumption decreased in quantity, but in comparison to 2020, the cost of fuel increased from **74,112 GEL to 91,703 GEL** in 2022;
- Among the members of the City Council, Malkhaz Toria, the first deputy chairman of the City Council, consumed the highest amount of fuel, totaling **3,374 liters**, which amounted to a cost of **11,150 GEL**;
- Among the officials of the factions, Irakli Gogokhia, the chairman of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction, consumed the highest amount of fuel, using a total of **1,795** liters, with a value of **5,827 GEL**;
- The members of the “United National Movement” faction declined the reimbursement for telephone communication expenses starting from the first City Council meeting. As per the decision made in June 2022, this reimbursement was subsequently revoked for all the members.

CHAPTER 2: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZUGDIDI

The City Council of Zugdidi is the representative body of the Municipality of Zugdidi which exercises [the powers](#) determined by the Local Self-Government Code in the territory of the municipality. It also **assumes oversight responsibilities over the activities of the executive body** and its officials within the limits established by law and carries out other powers assigned to it by the Constitution of Georgia, other legislative acts, and the Rules of Procedure of the City Council.

The City Council of Zugdidi has **45** members, **15** of whom are elected in single-mandate majoritarian electoral districts, and **30** members are elected proportionally.

The Zugdidi City Council is among those representative bodies where no political party was able to secure a clear majority following the local government elections in 2021. As a result of the elections, the number of mandates was distributed as follows:

- “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” - 20 mandates, including 7 majoritarian mandates
- “United National Movement” - 22 mandates, including 8 majoritarian mandates
- “Gakharia for Georgia” - 3 mandates

Compared to the previous convocation of the City Council, the number of women members in the Council increased from 7 to 14, accounting for **31.1%** of the total membership. Out of 14 female members of the City Council, 6 hold the positions of the Commission Chairperson (3); Faction Chairperson (1); Deputy Chairperson of the Faction (2).

During the tenure of the Zugdidi City Council, the following **commissions** were established:

1. Legal, Mandate Issues and Human Rights Protection Commission (Chairman- Bela Mosia)
2. Finance-Budgetary and Revision Issues Commission (Chairman- Besik Gabunia)
3. Healthcare and Social Affairs Commission (Chairman-Maia Gatsferelia)
4. Education, Culture, Sports, Youth and Gender Issues Commission (Chairman- Mariam Akhalaia)
5. Economics, Urban Development and Property Management Commission (Chairman Giorgi Sordia)

There are 3 factions operating in the City Council: “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia”; “United National Movement”; “Zugdidi for Georgia”.

While the Chairpersons of the previous convocation factions had 1 or 2 deputies, this number has increased for the current convocation: Chairman of the faction “United National Movement” has 7 deputies, Chairman of the Faction “Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia” has 6 deputies.

The faction “Zugdidi for Georgia” does not have officials but all of its 3 members hold different positions at the City Council: Giga Parulava is the Chairman of the City Council, Malkhaz Toria serves as the Deputy Chairman of the Council and Bela Mosia is the Chairman of the Commission.

The number of Deputy Chairpersons of the City Council has increased from 2 to 3. In total, 24 of the 45 members of the Zugdidi City Council are public officials, other members of the City

Council exercise their powers free of charge, in accordance with the law. A [table](#) with detailed information about the public officials is provided.

General Statistics:

Throughout the reporting period, a total of **28** City Council sessions were conducted, with **19** out of them being classified as extraordinary, convened by the Mayor of the Municipality.

During the reporting period, Zugdidi City Council adopted **45** resolutions, 30 of which were authored/initiated by the Mayor, and **15** resolutions were issued by the City Council.

The supervisory body formulated 4 conclusions/remarks on the legal acts of the Zugdidi City Council, all of which were subsequently shared by the City Council.

During the reporting period, a total of **5** petitions were registered at the City Council, out of which 1 was not adopted, 1 was partially adopted and another one was fully adopted; 2 petitions are still being discussed.

CHAPTER 3. IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS

Gratuitous transfer of property to the state:

- Based on the decision made on October 7, 2022, the Zugdidi City Council transferred land plots in eight villages of the municipality to the state without any charge. These land plots have a combined area of 3,871 square meters and include seven buildings situated on them. Subsequently, this state-owned property was intended to be sold to JSC “Georgian Medical Holding” at a symbolic price of 1 GEL. The responsibility of the company is to organize and oversee the operation of medical clinics on these land plots.
- As per the decision made on December 1, 2022, the Zugdidi City Council transferred a non-agricultural land plot measuring 137 square meters in the village of Narazeni to the state, free of charge. This land was intended to be allocated for the construction of a chapel for the Patriarchate of Georgia.

The present practice of municipalities transferring property to the state does have certain negative aspects. Local self-governments should independently make decisions regarding the property they own. The transfer of municipal property for charitable or other purposes should be the sole responsibility of the Self-Government, without the involvement of the Central Government.

Important Documents adopted by the City Council:

- “Zugdidi City Cultural Development Strategy” and action plan, which is implemented with the support of EU4Culture project (grant amount 300,000 euros) - 20.05.2022
- Gender Equality Strategy of Zugdidi Municipality - 07.10.2022;
- Zugdidi Municipal Gender Equality Action Plan 2023-2024 and “Roadmap” for the Localization of the National Action Plan in Zugdidi Municipality within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 “Women, Peace, and Security” - 14.12.2022
- 2023-2027 Municipal Waste Management Action Plan of Zugdidi Municipality - 23.12.2022

Changes in the composition of the City Council:

- In December 2021, Irakli Lagvilava, a member of the Zugdidi City Council representing “Georgian Dream”, resigned from his position based on his personal will, and he was subsequently replaced by Giorgi Kortava.
- Besik Chezha, a member of the Zugdidi City Council representing “Georgian Dream”, was appointed as the deputy mayor of Zugdidi. He was replaced by Iruza Kakava in February 2022.
- Giorgi Bigvava, a member of the Zugdidi City Council from the United National Movement, resigned based on his own statement in June 2022 and was replaced by Tamar Chichinadze;
- Giorgi Pipia, a member of the Zugdidi City Council from the United National Movement, resigned based on his own statement in December 2021 and was replaced by Manuchar Pipia.

CHAPTER 4: ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSIONS AND FACTIONS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Activities of the Commissions of the City Council:

During the reporting period, the five permanent commissions of the Zugdidi City Council held a total of 108 sessions. Only one session was interrupted due to the absence of a quorum. The commissions collectively presented 139 matters for review to the City Council, while the Commission for Legal, Mandate, and Human Rights Protection issues produced 156 assessments on the conformity of draft legal acts with the legislation to be examined by the City Council.

The number of sessions of the City Council Commissions in 2022				
Legal, Mandate Issues and Human Rights Protection Commission	Healthcare and Social Affairs Commission	Finance-Budgetary and Revision Issues Commission	Education, Culture, Sports, Youth, and Gender Issues Commission	Economics, Urban Development and Property Management Commission
16	11	30	18	33

Number of Issues submitted to the City Council by Commissions				
Legal, Mandate Issues and Human Rights Protection Commission	Healthcare and Social Affairs Commission	Finance-Budgetary and Revision Issues Commission	Education, Culture, Sports, Youth, and Gender Issues Commission	Economics, Urban Development and Property Management Commission
30	4	10	5	90

Activities of the factions of the City Council:

Three factions worked in Zugdidi City Council in 2022: “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia”, “United National Movement” and “Zugdidi for Georgia”. The latter operates without public officials.

It is worth noting that there has been a notable increase in the number of faction initiatives compared to 2020. In 2020, out of the six factions operating in the City Council, only two factions had a combined total of 18 initiatives. However, in 2022, three factions collectively presented a significantly higher number of initiatives, totaling 59. Furthermore, in many cases, these initiatives encompassed multiple issues.

Issues initiated by factions can be found at the following [link](#):

Faction	Number of Written Initiatives
“Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia”	25
“United National Movement”	28
“Zugdidi for Georgia”	6
Sum of Initiatives	59

A total of **633,443 GEL** was spent on the activities of the factions in 2022. Out of this amount, **599,340 GEL** was utilized for salaries, reflecting an increase of **350,341 GEL** compared to the corresponding figure in 2020.

The representatives of the factions consumed **8,845 liters** of fuel worth **29,087 GEL** in 2022. Among the officials of the factions, Irakli Gogokhia, the chairman of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction, consumed the highest amount of fuel, using a total of **1,795 liters**, with a value of **5,827 GEL**;

Expenditures incurred on the activities of factions in 2022 (in GEL)		
Fuel Expenses	Payroll	Business Trips
29,087	599,340	837

CHAPTER 5: POLITICAL CRISIS AND THE WEAKENED THE ROLE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Following the Local Self-Government elections in October 2021, Zugdidi was one of the municipalities where issues pertaining to local democracy deteriorated.

- Due to political conflicts or disagreements between the parties, the election of the chairman of the Zugdidi City Council [faced delays](#), and it took [two months](#) after the first meeting of the City Council (December 3, 2021) for the chairman to be elected. The successful election occurred on February 14, 2022, after [six attempts](#). Giga Farulava, the representative of the “Gakharia for Georgia” party, was elected as the chairman of the Zugdidi City Council, and the first deputy chairman of the City Council was also elected from the same party. Two vacant positions of deputy chairmen were [occupied](#) by the representatives of the “United National Movement”. The positions of the chairpersons of the commissions in the Zugdidi City Council were assigned to representatives from both the “United National Movement” and “Gakharia for Georgia” parties. “Georgian Dream” representatives abstained from participating in the voting for the election of officials. Additionally, they chose not to nominate their own candidates for the positions of the deputy chairman of the City Council and the chairpersons of the commissions.
- Zugdidi was one of the municipalities where the ruling party presented the 2022 budget to the 2017 convocation city council in an exceptionally accelerated manner, setting a precedent for its quick [adoption](#). Logically, the 2022 budget had to be approved by the New Convocation City Council, as this City Council was also responsible for its control. The budgets for 2022 were expeditedly presented to the city councils of the previous convocation in municipalities where a representative of “Georgian Dream” was elected as mayor, and an opposition majority was formed in the city councils. With this scenario, the ruling party tried to avoid directing the local political processes in a scenario that was unfavorable to its interests.¹ This process was further encouraged by the Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, when he [said](#) that when there is a “Georgian dream” in the central government, the opposition at the local level “can not take a step” without them;
- The changes made to the “Local Self-Government” Code in December 2022, initiated by the ruling party, resulted in a significant weakening of the role of the City Councils. Under the previous edition of the code, if the budget was not approved within three months from the beginning of the budget year, the authority of both the mayor and the city council would be terminated prematurely. After the changes, the sole responsibility [fell upon the City Council](#). As a result, it is anticipated that city councils, especially those without a party holding a strong majority, will be less inclined to express differing positions on the draft budget.

1 Under the current version of the law, if there is a disagreement between the City Council and the Mayor regarding the 2022 budget project, it could serve as grounds for the premature termination of the powers of both the Mayor and the City Council.

CHAPTER 6: CONTROL OF THE BODIES ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COUNCIL

According to the Local Self-Government Code, City Council exercises the oversight function over the activities of the municipality's executive bodies and their officials, listens to and evaluates their reports², and the mayor is accountable to the City Council and the population.³

Compared to the previous convocation of the City Council, in 2022 there was a partial improvement in the exercise of oversight function by the Zugdidi City Council over the activities of the Zugdidi City Hall and legal entities;

The City Council, commissions, and factions extended invitations to representatives of the Mayor's office on 124 occasions to discuss specific matters, marking an increase of 40 instances compared to the corresponding figure in 2020.

In 2022, the City Council declined to support two issues that were initiated by the mayor.

The mayor was scheduled to present his report to the Zugdidi City Council on December 26, 2022, but the meeting could not take place due to the absence of a quorum. Moreover, other officials from the City Hall did not present any reports to the City Council in 2022.

The City Council of Zugdidi did not disclose any instances of conflict of interest or misconduct concerning the activities of the City Hall, including the state procurement process. In 2022, a temporary working group was created in the City Council to study the activities of legal entities established by the municipality, only the members of the "United National Movement" faction were involved in the working group's activities.

In 2022, one fact of violating the requirements of the code of ethics was revealed in Zugdidi City Council. During the City Council session on December 28, 2022, Tengiz Mamporia, the deputy chairman of the "United National Movement" faction, made offensive remarks towards a woman. The City Council regarded this behavior as a breach of ethical norms. In February 2023, Mamforia received a warning as a disciplinary measure in response to his inappropriate conduct.

During the formulation of the 2023 budget, distinct commissions and factions of the City Council provided [recommendations](#) to the Zugdidi City Hall, some of which were fully or partially incorporated into the finalized 2023 budget.

2 Sub-paragraph G.A, Paragraph 1, Article 24 of the Local Self-Government Code.

3 Paragraph 2 of Article 48 of the Local Self-Government Code.

CHAPTER 7: INCOMPLETE ASSET DECLARATIONS AND ALLEGED CASES OF NEPOTISM

Only one member of the Zugdidi City Council filled out the asset declaration with violations:



Irakli Gogokhia

Chairman of the Zugdidi City Council Faction "Georgian Dream – Democratic Georgia"

In his [declaration](#) filled out on January 2023, Irakli Gogokhia listed all of the companies where he is the shareholder: "[Zugpetroil](#)" LLC; "[Oil Pro](#)" LLC; "[Oil Pro Group](#)" LLC; "[Imedi 2](#)" LLC; "[Victoria 2012](#)" LLC and "[Jipsi](#)" LLC. The declaration mentions the transfer of the shares with management rights. However, despite the legal requirement, there is no information regarding the transfer of these shares with management rights to another individual in the excerpts of the business registry.

Legal requirements:

As per the [Law on Combating Corruption](#), within two months of assuming a position, an individual is obligated to submit a declaration. This declaration should contain information about their own and their family members' assets and economic interests. If the person holds shares in business organizations with management rights, they are required to transfer those shares to another individual. Additionally, if appointed to a position such as a director or head of an organization, they must divest themselves from any business-related activities within 10 days of assuming the position⁴.

4 Article 14, Clause 10

CHAPTER 8. INVOLVEMENT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL IN THE COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES

The [Rules of Procedure](#) of the City Council of Zugdidi do not specify what kind of absence from a session by a member of the City Council is to be considered as absence without a valid reason. The Rules of Procedure rely on a [provision](#) of the Local Self-Government Code, according to which the powers of a member of a municipal/city council are to be prematurely terminated if he/she has not participated, without a valid reason, in the work of the municipal/city council for six consecutive months.

Participation in sessions of the City Council:

There were 337 absences of members of the City Council from the Council's sessions in 2022, including 320 absences without a valid reason.

Among the members of the City Council, Mamuka Kurashvili, a member of the faction "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" had the highest number of absences without a valid reason, missing a total of **22** sessions. Additionally, Davit Vekua, Deputy Chairperson of the "United National Movement" faction had **17** absences, while Paata Adamia, a member of the faction, had **16** absences, ranking them among the leaders in terms of session absences.

The chairman of the City Council, Giga Parulava is the only person who has not missed any sessions of the City Council.

See detailed information in the [annex](#):

Participation in sessions of the City Council's commissions:

The members of the City Council were also missing the commission sessions. In total, there were 297 absences from sessions of commissions identified, including 253- absences without a valid reason.

Joni Jikia, Deputy Chairman of the "Georgian Dream - Democratic Georgia" faction, holds the highest number of missed commission sessions among the city council members without a valid reason, totaling **26**. Tazo Patsatsia, deputy chairman of the same faction, has recorded 21 absences without a valid reason from the commission sessions. Additionally, Davit Vekua, deputy chairman of the "United National Movement" faction has accumulated 18 absences, placing them among the leaders in terms of absences without valid reason from the commission sessions.

See detailed information in the [annex](#):

The frequency of speeches and reports delivered during the sessions of the City Council and the speeches given during the Commission Sessions

In 2022, among the **45** members of the Zugdidi City Council, 10 members refrained from exercising their right to speak, for comparison, the previous convocation of the City Council had **25** silent members in 2020.

During the reporting period "Silent" members of the City Council were:

- Besik Chezha - Deputy Chairman of the "United National Movement" faction
- Merab Chachua - Deputy Chairman of the "United National Movement" faction

- Giorgi Kortava - Member of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction
- Mamuka Kurashvili - Member of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction
- Irakli Janashia - Member of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction
- Soso Gogokhia - Member of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction
- Giorgi Pipia - Member of the “Georgian Dream-Democratic Georgia” faction
- Tamar Chichinadze - Member of the “United National Movement” faction
- Tengiz Jikia - Member of the “United National Movement” faction
- Miranda Esebua - Member of the “United National Movement” faction

32 members did not present their reports during the council sessions; You can find detailed information about The frequency of speeches and reports delivered during the Council sessions in the [table](#).

CHAPTER 9: CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE CITY COUNCIL'S ACTIVITIES

The City Council of Zugdidi has adopted all the regulations that ensure citizens' involvement in the activities of the municipality, including those of the City Council:

- During the reporting period, **5** petitions were registered in the City Council, although the electronic system for submitting petitions has not yet been implemented;
- On November 24, 2022, the Zugdidi City Council conducted its first-ever open-door session, during which voters and representatives from various organizations were invited to speak. In this session, they had the opportunity to provide the City Council with valuable information regarding the challenges faced by specific communities or settlements.
- The City Council together with the City Hall conducts public budget discussions;
- The members of the City Council actively participate in the “General Assemblies of the settlement”, engage in the ongoing process of the “Rural Support Program”, and regularly meet with the constituents;
- The quality of access to public information has been [significantly improved](#).

CHAPTER 10: ACTIVITIES OF THE GENDER EQUALITY COUNCIL

The Gender Equality Council has been operating in the Zugdidi City Council since 2018, and the action plan of the Council was approved on April 5, 2019, however, both in the previous period and in 2022, the Gender Equality Council:

- has not analyzed a single legal act;
- has not provided expertise on the draft legal legislative acts;
- The system of monitoring and evaluation of measures implemented to ensure gender equality has not been developed;
- The Council has not yet presented the 2021 report to the City Council, and there have been no proposals or recommendations prepared. At this stage, the 2022 report is being prepared;
- The Gender Equality Council held discussions and issued a condemnation regarding the derogatory remarks made by Tengiz Mamporia, the deputy chairman of the “United National Movement” faction in the City Council, towards a woman during a City Council meeting.

CHAPTER 11: EXPENDITURES OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF ZUGDIDI

Salary and monetary reward:

The expenditures of the Zugdidi City Council in 2022 totaled **1,302,230 GEL**, representing an increase of **265,786 GEL** compared to the corresponding figure in 2020. During the same period, only civil servants and freelancers employed in the City Council office received a monetary reward amounting to **100,070 GEL**, signifying an increase of **82,870 GEL** compared to the corresponding figure in 2020.

Salaries and bonuses at the Zugdidi City Council (in GEL) in 2022	
Public Officials	629,961
Employees of the City Council office	672,269
Sum	1,302,230

You can find detailed information about the salaries of Zugdidi City Council officials in 2022 in the [table](#).

Reimbursement of expenses of members of the City Council:

The Local Self-Government Code provides for the possibility of reimbursement of expenses associated with the exercise of powers by those members of the City Council who are not officials and, accordingly, do not receive remuneration. Such expenditure in the Zugdidi City Council in 2022 amounted to **147,676 GEL**.

Business Trip Expenses:

In the reporting period, a total of **1,187 GEL** was spent on business trips of Zugdidi City Council members and office staff, both within the country and abroad.

Telephone Communication Expenses:

The members of the “United National Movement” faction declined the reimbursement for telephone communication expenses starting from the first City Council meeting. As per the decision made in June 2022, this reimbursement was subsequently revoked for all the members. Telephone expenses are reimbursed only to the employees of the City Council office. In 2022, the total cost of telephone communication amounted to **4,757 GEL**.

Cars and Fuel Expenses:

Unlike the previous convocation of the City Council, the current City Council of Zugdidi does not utilize cars owned by the municipality; The fuel limit for the chairman of the City Council has been reduced from 700 to 400 liters, while for the deputies, it has been decreased from 400 to 350 liters.

The monthly limit for the chairmen of commissions and factions is still 150 liters, and the monthly limit for chairmen of factions is 50.

The fuel consumption by the City Council decreased in 2022, as it used a total of **27.6 tons** (equivalent to 27,675 liters) of fuel, amounting to **91,703 GEL**. In contrast, in 2020, the Zugdidi

City Council consumed a total of [42.2 tons](#) (equivalent to 42,257 liters) of fuel, [costing 74,112 GEL](#).

Among the members of the City Council, Malkhaz Toria, the first deputy chairman of the City Council, consumed the highest amount of fuel, totaling **3,374 liters**, which amounted to a cost of **11,150 GEL**;

Data on the fuel consumed by high-ranking officials of the City Council

Name/Last Name	The amount of fuel consumed	The cost of fuel consumed
Giga Parulava - Chairman of the City Council	3,061	10,675
Malkhaz Toria - the first deputy chairman of the City Council	3,374	11,150
Teimuraz Basilaia - Deputy Chairman of the City Council	1,667	5,876
Kakhaber Changelia - Deputy Chairman of the City Council	1,279	4,329

RECOMMENDATIONS

Exercise of control/oversight:

- There is a need for increased involvement of Zugdidi City Council members in oversight activities. Specifically, they should utilize control mechanisms more actively and take effective measures to monitor public procurement processes and large infrastructure projects;
- The standing commissions of the City Council should play an active role in overseeing the activities of executive bodies;
- The City Council should diligently and proactively work towards identifying cases of conflict of interest, incompatibility with public office, and violations of the Rules of Procedure of the City Council and ethical norms within the municipality.

Sessions of the City Council:

- To enhance the quality of mobilizing interest groups and citizens' engagement, it is advisable for the City Council to minimize the frequency of extraordinary sessions. This will allow more time for adequate preparation of the topics to be discussed during the sessions and lead to increased transparency within the deliberative body.

Accountability:

- Improving the attendance rate at the City Council sessions and its commissions is essential. We believe that all City Council members should take their responsibility seriously and make a concerted effort to attend the meetings. Moreover, appropriate sanctions should be in place for members who miss a session without a valid reason;
- It is crucial for City Council members to actively exercise their right to speak during the sessions and commission meetings, express their opinions on the topics under discussion, provide insights into the specific needs of citizens to both the City Council and the City Hall.

Citizen Engagement:

- The City Council of Zugdidi should establish an electronic platform that allows citizens to electronically submit petitions, proposals, opinions on specific issues, or any initiatives. This platform will significantly increase the opportunities for citizens to actively participate and engage in the activities of the representative body, fostering a more inclusive and participatory local governance process.

Gender Equality Council:

- There is a need to enhance the activities of the Gender Equality Council. To achieve this, the Council should focus on increasing the number of initiated projects, recommendations, and proposals.