

## Current Political Situation in Georgia ahead of Crucial General Elections



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- Whereas the Georgian people have consistently demonstrated their unwavering support for Georgia's European integration;
- Whereas the October 2024 parliamentary elections will be decisive in determining Georgia's future democratic development and geopolitical choice;
- Whereas the EPP is seriously concerned with the democratic backsliding in Georgia;
- Whereas the current government of Georgia has repeatedly sabotaged Georgia's European agenda and failed to fulfil the 9 steps laid out by the European Commission as a path to opening of Accession Talks with the European Union; whereas the European Council decided to grant candidate status to Georgia solely on the understanding that these steps would be taken;
- Having regard to continuous and severe disturbing cases of intimidation and violence against the opposition as well as threats of further repressions voiced by oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili to outlaw the democratic pro-Western opposition and silence the dissent; the tightened control by the ruling party over the state institutions, including the electoral administration and judiciary that undermines the free and fair conduct of elections;
- Having regard to growing anti-Western and hostile rhetoric by the ruling party representatives against Georgia's strategic Western partners, including the European Union and its officials, and promoting Russian disinformation and manipulation;
- Whereas the "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence" adopted by the ruling Georgian Dream against the will of the Georgian people, mass public protests and unequivocal criticism by Georgia's Western partners, has already undermined Georgia's path to EU membership and poses a threat to independent civil society and free media, leads to suspension of significant financial aid to Georgia that deprives hundreds of thousands of Georgian citizens of services provided by the civil society organizations in terms of protecting the human rights of vulnerable groups, empowering women, youth and minorities.
- Having regard to previous statements and resolutions of the European People's Party (EPP), as well as the Resolution (2463) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) of 10 October 2022 on *Further escalation in the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine*, European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2022 on *the Implementation of the EU Association Agreement with Georgia* (2021/2236(INI)), European Parliament resolution of 15 February 2023 on the *Situation of the Former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili* (2023/2543(RSP)), European Parliament resolution of 25 April 2024 on *attempts to reintroduce a foreign agent law in Georgia and its restrictions on civil society* (2024/2703(RSP)), OSCE PA EPP & likeminded Group Statement of 23 February 2024 on *the Death of Alexei Navalny and Current Political Prisoners*, European Parliament resolution of 28 February 2024 on *the Implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy – Annual Report 2023* (2023/2117(INI)), Report by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment (CPT) of 18 January 2024 on the Visit to Georgia, EPP & likeminded Group in the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCEPA) Resolution of 2 July 2024 on *the Deteriorating Situation in Georgia After the Adoption of the Law on Foreign Influence*;

## The European People's Party

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- Expects the Georgian government to respect the will and the free choice of the Georgian people in the upcoming parliamentary elections; believes that the election result should allow the country to return to its pro-Western democratic agenda, implement the necessary reforms and launch Accession Talks with the European Union;
- Calls on the Georgian authorities to ensure free, competitive and a safe conduct of the elections;
- Calls on the ruling Georgian Dream party and oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili to immediately stop violence, intimidation, hate speeches, persecution and repressions against the opposition, civil society and independent media;
- Urges the Georgian government to abolish the “Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence” and enable the civil society and free media to operate freely; underlines that the law is incompatible with EU values and democratic principles, runs against Georgia’s ambitions for EU membership, damages Georgia’s international reputation and endangers the country’s Euro-Atlantic integration;
- Remains concerned over the political imprisonment of former President Mikheil Saakashvili and calls on the Georgian government to end the political retribution and release President Saakashvili unconditionally;
- Calls on the European Union and democratic partners to hold accountable and impose personal sanctions on oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili and those responsible for undermining democracy in Georgia, complicit in violence against political opponents and peaceful protesters, and spreading anti-Western disinformation;
- Welcomes an important decision by the EPP member parties, the United National Movement (UNM) and European Georgia (EG), to form a coalition for these crucial elections. The consolidation of opposition votes in general is of utmost importance, and such a necessary unity is fully supported by our political family;
- Reiterates its steadfast support for Georgia’s democratic development and Euro-Atlantic aspirations of the Georgian people highlighting the opportunities that Georgia would gain access to immediately after the opening of Accession Talks, including EU structural Funds for harmonization of its legal system, financial institutions, infrastructure and social services to improve the standards of living for each and every Georgian citizen.



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