

European Parliament Slams Georgia's Democratic Decline, Calls for Urgent Reforms and New Elections

By Liza Mchedlidze

The European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee adopted a detailed report assessing Georgia's political trajectory between 2023 and 2024. With 55 members backing the document, 14 opposing, and four abstaining, the report underscores growing alarm in Brussels over the country's democratic regression.

The report was spearheaded by Lithuanian MEP Rasa Juknevičienė from the European People's Party, who delivered a stark presentation. She described Georgia's fall from a democratic frontrunner among EU partners to a system veering toward autocracy. Juknevičienė warned that the state had been taken over from within, citing fraudulent elections, opposition crackdowns, suppression of independent voices, and growing anti-EU sentiment fostered by officials.

Central to the report is the ruling party's decision, made on November 28, 2024, to abandon Georgia's path toward European integration. This act, according to the report, violated the constitutional pledge toward Euro-Atlantic alignment and reversed the population's clear pro-European will. The document condemns the government's failure to meet nine reform benchmarks set by the European Commission and attributes the stalled accession process to increasing authoritarian measures



and the passing of laws designed to crush dissent.

The Committee offers full solidarity to the Georgian people, stressing that support for their democratic aspirations remains firm. Strong language is used to denounce attacks on protestors, journalists, and political opponents, with calls for the immediate repeal of restrictive legislation. The report demands transparent investigations into violent incidents and warns that ongoing repression may trigger conditional suspension of economic cooperation under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

A pointed section targets Bidzina Ivanishvili, founder and honorary chair of the ruling Georgian Dream party, holding him personally accountable for political deterioration. The report proposes personal sanctions against him, his family, companies, and assets within the EU.

Further, the document refuses to recognize the results of Georgia's October 26, 2024, parliamentary elections, describing them as fraudulent. It calls the resulting legislature a "one-party parliament," fundamentally at odds with democratic pluralism. The Committee insists that early elections, held under improved conditions and monitored by independent observers, are essential to resolving the deepening constitutional crisis.

In the report, Georgia's current political leadership is referred to as "self-proclaimed." It affirms support for Salome Zourabichvili as the country's legitimate president, distancing

the European Union from the authority of Mikheil Kavelashvili, described as appointed without legitimate mandate. It further calls on EU officials to avoid contact with representatives of the ruling regime until democratic norms are restored.

The report highlights the targeting of civil society groups, independent journalism, and peaceful protestors. EU institutions are urged to expand support for these sectors immediately, especially in light of the recent withdrawal of USAID support.

On foreign policy, the Committee expresses concern over Georgia's low alignment with EU positions and condemns the government's increasing cooperation with Moscow, despite Russian occupation of Georgian territory. The report highlights the suspension of €30 million in assistance from the European Peace Facility in 2024, with no plans for renewed support next year.

Looking forward, the report identifies upcoming local elections as a pivotal test of Georgia's democratic resilience. MEPs encourage opposition parties to unify and reflect the people's will through peaceful, lawful means. Juknevičienė concluded with a sobering message: "Strong action is needed before it is too late. Brave Georgians fighting for a European future deserve unwavering support."

Civil Groups Say Georgian Dream Is Silencing Critical Media

By Liza Mchedlidze

According to a joint statement from civil society and media organizations, the ruling Georgian Dream party is trying to control the media and limit free speech in Georgia. The statement accuses the party of using state power to censor and punish independent news outlets that criticize the government.

The groups say the ruling party filed official complaints with the Communications Commission against TV Pirveli, Formula, and Mtavari TV, which now operates only online. These complaints focus on banning the use of certain words and phrases like "regime prisoners," "Dream's Ministry of Internal Affairs," and "illegitimate parliament." According to the statement, these are not lies but opin-

ions that should be protected under Georgian law.

The groups claim the Communications Commission is not acting fairly and is under the control of Georgian Dream. They say the complaints are meant to intimidate journalists and pressure them into silence.

In their view, this is happening during a wider political crisis. The statement says the 2024 elections lacked legitimacy and the government has stopped talks with the European Union, despite public support for joining the EU. It also says peaceful protests have been broken up with violence and that many protesters have been arrested, mistreated, or charged unfairly. The statement points to new laws passed in 2024 and 2025 that label NGOs and media as foreign agents and limit their

work.

The groups believe these actions are part of a broader plan to crush independent voices. They say journalists are being attacked during protests, smeared in the media, and put under financial pressure. At the same time, media loyal to the government are being supported, while critical outlets are being pushed aside.

They also say the complaints use legal tools not to fix real problems, but to punish the media for speaking out. According to the statement, Georgian Dream officials often refuse to appear on independent channels and then accuse those outlets of being unfair. The groups argue that this is not a true test of balance, but a political tactic.

The statement claims that these actions go against international agreements. It mentions the European Convention on Human Rights, which protects free speech, and United Nations guidance that says the media

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"GEORGIAN DREAM" IMPLEMENTS A POLICY OF
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must be free to question leaders. It also refers to Council of Europe rules that say media regulators must stay politically neu-

tral.

The signatories of the statement are asking the international community to respond. They want foreign governments and organizations to speak out

against these actions and monitor the situation. They are also calling for support for journalists in Georgia, including legal and diplomatic help.

The statement ends with a

warning that without free media, democracy cannot survive. According to the groups, silencing reporters and controlling news is against both the Georgian Constitution and the

country's international promises.

The statement is signed by many groups across the country, including Transparency International Georgia, the Media Development Foundation, the Europe Foundation, Sapari, and dozens of others working in media, human rights, and civil society.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

UN General Assembly Adopts Georgia IDP Resolution

Nicaragua, Sudan, and Zimbabwe — the same count as last year, but with Equatorial Guinea and Sudan newly added, while Burundi and Syria dropped out. Syria, which had consistently voted

turn regardless of ethnicity, and calls for the protection of their property. It also mandates the UN Secretary-General to report yearly on conditions and implementation.

project is aimed at creating a “logistical support facility” for Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, not a formal naval base.

He confirmed that an agreement has already been signed and stated that the facility would deepen military cooperation between Russian and Abkhaz forces.

Gunba’s remarks differ from earlier reports in 2023, when Russia announced plans to open a permanent naval base in

Voting Ended			6/3/2025	3:48:41 PM
Item 33 - A/79/L.90				
Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the				
AFGHANISTAN	CAMEROON	FINLAND	KUWAIT	NEPAL
ALBANIA	CANADA	FRANCE	KYRGYZSTAN	NETHERLANDS
ALGERIA	CENTRAL AF...	GABON	LAO PDR	NEW ZEALAND
ANDORRA	CHAD	GAMBIA	LATVIA	NICARAGUA
ANGOLA	CHILE	GEORGIA	LEBANON	SEYCHELLES
ANTIGUA-BA...	CHINA	GERMANY	LESOTHO	SIERRA LEONE
ARGENTINA	COLOMBIA	GHANA	LITHUANIA	SINGAPORE
ARMENIA	COMOROS	GREECE	LUXEMBOURG	SINGAPORE
AUSTRALIA	CONGO	GUATEMALA	LIBERIA	SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA	COSTA RICA	GUINEA	LIECHTENSTEIN	SLOVENIA
AZERBAIJAN	COTE D'IVOIRE	GUYANA	LUXEMBOURG	SOMALIA
BAHAMAS	CUBA	HAITI	MADAGASCAR	SOUTH AFRICA
BAHRAIN	CYPRUS	HONDURAS	MAJORCA	SOUTH SUDAN
BANGLADESH	CZECHIA	HUNGARY	MALAWI	SPAIN
BARBADOS	DEM PR OF K...	ICELAND	MALAYSIA	SRI LANKA
BELARUS	DEM REP OF ...	INDIA	MALDIVES	SUDAN
BELGIUM	DENMARK	INDONESIA	MALTA	SURINAME
BENIN	DJIBOUTI	IRAQ	MAURITANIA	SWEDEN
BHUTAN	DOMINICA	IRAQ	MAURITIUS	SWITZERLAND
BOLIVIA	DOMINICAN ...	ISRAEL	MEXICO	SYRIAN ARA...
BOSNIA-HER...	EGYPT	ITALY	MICRONESIA...	TAJIKISTAN
BOTSWANA	EL SALVADOR	JAMAICA	MONACO	THAILAND
BRAZIL	ERITREA	JAPAN	MONGOLIA	TIMOR-LESTE
BRUNEI DAR...	EQUATORIAL...	JORDAN	MONTENEGRO	TONGA
BULGARIA	ESTONIA	KAZAKHSTAN	MOROCCO	TRINIDAD-TO...
BURKINA FASO	ETHIOPIA	KENYA	MOZAMBIQUE	TUNISIA
BURUNDI	FIJI	KIRIBATI	MYANMAR	TURKMENIST...
CABO VERDE			NAMIBIA	TUVALU
CAMBODIA			NAURU	TURKEY
			SAO TOME-P...	UGANDA
IN FAVOUR: 107				
AGAINST: 9				
ABSTENTION: 49				

On June 3, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution affirming the right of return for all displaced persons and refugees from Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia. The vote saw 107 countries in favor, 9 against, and 49 abstentions.

The number of supporters rose from 103 last year, with Paraguay, South Korea, Seychelles, and Sierra Leone joining the “yes” camp. The nine countries voting “no” were Russia, Belarus, Cuba, North Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Mali,

against the resolution in the past, abstained this year following the fall of the Assad regime in December.

Georgia's Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili welcomed the result on social media, calling it an “unprecedented number of supporters.” However, China abstained once again, despite its strategic partnership with the Georgian Dream government.

Georgia has submitted this resolution annually since 2008. It condemns forced demographic changes in Russian-occupied regions, reaffirms IDPs' right to re-

Abkhazia's De Facto Leader Denies Russian Naval Base Plans in Ochamchire



Badra Gunba, the de facto president of occupied Abkhazia, has denied that Russia plans to establish a full naval base in the coastal city of Ochamchire. In an interview with the Russian state news agency TASS on May 31, Gunba said the

the region.

Georgia's State Security Service, in its 2024 annual report, also claimed with “high likelihood” that the project is not for a base, but instead for a “container transportation terminal.”

Bridging borders through music: Georgian conservatoire pioneers digital innovation

On 2 June, the Vano Sarajishvili Tbilisi State Conservatoire hosted an event for digital innovation and cultural collaboration in Georgia. The event brought together perform-

ers from Tbilisi, Helsinki, and Trieste in real time, for a LoLa (Low Latency) audiovisual presentation-concert, demonstrating how network technology can revolutionise international coop-

eration in the arts.

LoLa enables ultra-lowlatency audio and video streaming, making it possible for artists across the world to perform together without delay.



Nino Bakradze, head of the quality assurance office at the institute, says, “It showed how technology can open up new opportunities for international cooperation and artistic exchange without borders.”

The presentation was a collaborative effort between the Conservatoire and GRENA (Georgia's Research and Educational Networking Association), with support from the EU-funded EaPConnect project. EaPConnect aims to reduce the digital divide and to bring Eastern Partnership countries into the European Research and Education Area. Also, the GEANT pan-European data network provided highspeed connectivity, ensuring a high-quality audiovisual experience for all participants.

Symbolically, the concert also demonstrated how education networks can act as cultural enablers and offer international artists and students a global stage. This revealed the potential of technologies, such as LoLa, and how they can transform not only music education, but the broader landscape of performing arts.

This event acts as a precedent for the Tbilisi State Conservatoire to integrate technology into its artistic programmes, and aims to host more concerts, masterclasses and workshops in the future.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

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Weather

Thursday, June 5

Day ☀ Clear
High: 27°C

Night 🌧 Partly Cloudy
Low: 16°C

Friday, June 6

Day 🌧 Partly Cloudy
High: 26°C

Night 🌧 Mostly Cloudy
Low: 15°C

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On the occasion of the Italian National Day, the Ambassador of Italy H.E. Massimiliano D'Antuono held a Reception on June 3, with the extraordinary participation of the Italian accordionists Simone Zanchini and Sara Calvanelli. The National Anthems were performed by the girls' choir "Gumbati"





