

European Parliament Urges Tougher Sanctions on Georgian Government Over Democratic Backsliding

By Liza Mchedlidze

The European Parliament has adopted a resolution calling on the European Union to consider further restrictive measures against the ruling Georgian Dream party and the Georgian government, citing severe democratic backsliding and increasing authoritarianism in the country.

The resolution urges the EU and its member states to explore measures such as cutting access to the SWIFT international banking system and imposing sectoral sanctions. According to the Parliament, these steps would target "the financial flows and sources of income of the Georgian Dream regime."

The resolution also calls for personal sanctions against Georgian Dream's political leaders, high-level government officials, and individuals deemed responsible for enabling the regime.

"We must act decisively to defend democracy in Georgia," said MEP Viola von Cramon, one of the resolution's co-sponsors. "The regime has clearly turned away from European values and is aligning itself with Russia, both in rhetoric and in practice."

The resolution condemns recent legislative changes passed without public consultation. These include a controversial "foreign agents" law and amendments that restrict freedom of assembly, limit media independence, and threaten civil society. The European Parliament argues these laws mirror policies



used in Russia to silence dissent and control the public.

"These actions are not compatible with the values of the European Union," said MEP Michael Gahler. "They are designed to silence critics, criminalize NGOs, and dismantle the opposition."

The Parliament expressed concern over increasing pressure on non-governmental organizations. It pointed to demands by state institutions, including the Anti-Corruption Bureau, for extensive financial and operational data from NGOs within an unreasonably short deadline of three working days. The resolu-

tion warns that this could render many organizations paralyzed.

Despite growing threats, the European Parliament commended Georgian civil society groups for continuing to provide legal support, document human rights violations, and pursue accountability through domestic and international courts. It emphasized the urgent need to increase financial and logistical support for civil society, independent media, and human rights defenders in Georgia.

In a strong rebuke, the resolution considers the Georgian Dream government to have de-

liberately abandoned its EU integration path. The resolution reads that the party disregards democratic standards and international human rights laws, warning that the country is following a trajectory similar to that of Russia.

The Parliament also condemned anti-LGBT legislation adopted by the Georgian Parliament in October 2024, calling it a violation of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. It demanded the repeal of that law and the reinstatement of gender quotas removed earlier that year.

The resolution calls the EU's

previous response insufficient, criticizing the Council and Commission for delayed and limited action. It encourages member states to act collectively or individually in imposing sanctions and stresses that a lack of unanimity must not prevent like-minded countries from responding.

Additionally, the European Parliament welcomed the European Council's decision to suspend visa-free travel for Georgian diplomats and officials. It described the move as a necessary first step and urged a review of Georgia's overall visa-free status with the EU, warning that suspension could follow if democratic standards continue to erode.

"The Georgian government must understand that it is solely responsible for the consequences of its actions," said MEP Petras Auštrevičius. "Ordinary citizens, journalists, and human rights defenders must not be punished for the regime's choices. We must protect their right to travel, speak out, and seek safety if necessary."

The resolution calls for sanctions to remain in place until democratic order is restored in Georgia and urges continued support for those resisting authoritarianism from within. It welcomed existing sanctions by countries including Germany, the Baltic states, the Czech Republic, and international partners like the United States and Canada, urging others to follow suit.

Senior Diplomat Tornike Parulava Dismissed Amid Ministry Restructuring, Says Euro-Atlantic Integration Efforts Dismantled

By Liza Mchedlidze

Tornike Parulava, Director of the Euro-Atlantic Integration Department at Georgia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, announced his dismissal this week, claiming that the move was part of a broader effort to dismantle departments responsible for European and Euro-Atlantic coordination.

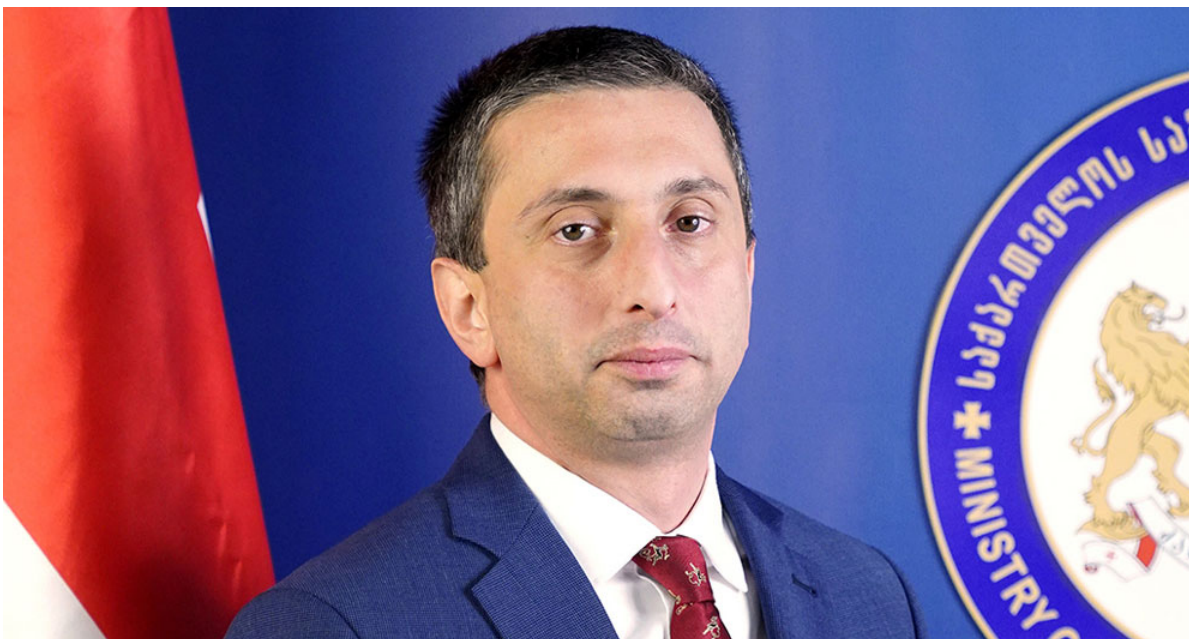
Parulava, who served nearly 24 years in the diplomatic service, announced in a lengthy social media post. He also revealed that his wife, an employee of the Parliament's Committee on European Integration, was dismissed the same week.

According to Parulava, the entire department he led was

terminated without any discussion of pending work or transition planning. He described the recent restructuring at the ministry as unprecedented in its intent and impact.

"This latest 'reorganization' stood out," Parulava wrote. "For the first time, one of its main objectives seemed to be the destruction of collegial relationships among ministry employees rather than fostering healthy competition — and this goal has been achieved."

He added that the restructuring appeared designed to erase institutional memory, noting that most remaining diplomats had been reassigned in ways



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that effectively erased years of accumulated experience.

“Starting July 1, we begin with a clean slate — this goal, too, has been achieved,” he wrote.

Parulava argued that the reorganization specifically targeted subdivisions coordinating Georgia’s Euro-Atlantic integration efforts, par-

ticularly those responsible for presenting interagency and sectoral reforms to Brussels.

“The units responsible for coordinating interagency and sectoral reform processes and presenting them to Brussels have been eliminated,” he wrote. “This directly indicates that, even in the long term, no one intends to continue these processes.”

He warned that by the time Georgia reaches its stated goal of EU membership by 2028, it could be even further behind in integration efforts than it is today.

Parulava also criticized how the process was carried out, calling it “inhumane.” He stated that the dismissals were delivered without warning, communication, or any

effort to mitigate their impact on the staff.

“The culmination came at the end of the week — dismissal orders were issued on Saturday night and Sunday, on a conveyor-belt basis,” he said. “The word ‘inhumane’ probably best describes it all.”

He concluded by expressing pride in having been fully affected by the process, stating

that after more than two decades of service, he was let go without a conversation or any formal handover.

“One more personal note — at the end of that same week, on July 5, my wife received her dismissal order from the Parliament’s Committee on European Integration,” Parulava wrote.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

EU: Georgian Elections Not Democratic Without Opposition Freed



Parlament Ewropew

The European Parliament has adopted an amendment to its resolution on Georgia, warning that the country’s upcoming elections will not reflect the democratic will of the Georgian people unless detained opposition leaders are released and substantial reforms are made to the electoral environment.

“These upcoming elections do not represent an opportunity to reflect the democratic choice of the Georgian people unless the imprisoned and detained opposition leaders are released,” the

resolution states. It further calls for the elections to be conducted in an “improved electoral environment” overseen by an “independent and impartial electoral administration” to ensure fair-

democratic conditions.

“There must be new free and fair parliamentary elections,” the resolution says. “These must be supervised by an independent and impartial electoral administration, and monitored closely by both international and independent local observers.”

The amendment also emphasizes the need to maintain the EU’s policy of non-recognition of Georgia’s one-party parliament and the president appointed under its rule. This stance, according to the resolution, must remain in place “until there is tangible change in Georgia’s political direction.”

MEPs argue that the restoration of democratic order in Georgia is a precondition for resuming meaningful political engagement. They stress that only through legitimate, inclusive, and transparent elections can Georgia begin to restore public trust and realign with European democratic norms.

while others were charged with unlawful possession or purchase of large or especially large quantities of drugs.

“Let me clarify — several of them are major drug dealers,” Geladze said.

The investigation revealed that those arrested used various methods to distribute drugs, including drop-off locations, internet applications, and social media. Police believe the narcotics were intended for sale in nightclubs and entertainment venues throughout Georgia.

“Based on court orders, our officers conducted multiple controlled purchases from the suspects and carried out covert audio and video recordings of those transactions,” Geladze noted.

During searches of homes and vehicles, officers seized a signifi-

cant quantity of drugs, including heroin, cocaine, Suboxone, methadone, and alpha-PVP. Authorities also confiscated drug packaging materials, large sums of money believed to be proceeds from illegal sales, as well as unregistered firearms and ammunition.

“If found guilty, the individuals arrested may face up to 20 years or life imprisonment,” Geladze warned.

He concluded by thanking law enforcement for their continued efforts.

“I want to express my deep thanks to all the police officers who tirelessly fight to put an end to drug trafficking in our country — saving countless citizens from the devastating effects of addiction.”

Police Arrest 34 in Nationwide Drug Raids, Seize Narcotics, Weapons, and Cash

Georgian police have arrested 34 individuals, including both Georgian and foreign nationals, in large-scale overnight raids targeting drug distribution networks across the country, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

“Last night, during large-scale operational activities conducted at dozens of locations across the country, we arrested 34 individuals on drug-related charges,” said Interior Minister Geka Geladze at a press briefing on Tuesday.

He stated that most of the suspects were involved in the illegal distribution of narcotics,



Weather

Thursday, July 10

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 31°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 21°C

Friday, July 11

Day Clear
High: 34°C

Night Clear
Low: 22°C

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