

Essential Fair Election Standards and Democratic Reforms in Georgia for EU Integration

The Congress of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Party, convening in Estoril, Portugal on October 4-6, 2024:

Emphasises:

- The necessity of free and fair elections in October 2024 as a crucial precondition identified by the EU Commission;
- The importance of Georgia's EU candidate status and addressing the EU Commission's nine recommendations;
- The obstruction of the European integration process by the adoption of the Kremlin style-"foreign agents" law ("Russian law") and the requirement for its repeal to initiate accession negotiations;
- The incompatibility of the planned anti-LGBT law with European values and human rights;
- Support for Georgian civil society and critical media, who are the main targets of the "Russian law." Protecting these pillars is crucial for democratic progression;
- Full adherence to the Copenhagen criteria, especially in building democratic institutions and aligning foreign and security policies with the EU.

Supports:

- The Georgian people's commitment to joining the EU; Georgia's rules-based full access to pre-accession financial assistance funds to help its economic and democratic development align with EU standards.
- Aligning with President Salome Zurbishvili's Georgian Charter and the essential reforms it outlines for opening EU membership negotiations;
- The formation of opposition coalitions to promote a pluralistic political environment and prevent loss of votes.

Regrets:

- The continued prosecution of activists who protested against the "Russian Law" in April and May 2024, and the enactment of this law;
- Ongoing political persecution in Georgia, including of President Saakashvili and other political prisoners;
- Georgian Dream's failure to meet the nine conditions for EU candidacy status, indicating regression in rule of law and anti-corruption efforts;
- The spread of anti-Western campaigns and disinformation by government officials, misleading and intimidating citizens regarding EU integration.

Condemns:

- Threatening phone calls, raids on opposition party and civil society offices, kidnappings, beatings of demonstrators, ambushes, and physical attacks on the homes of opposition leaders and civil activists, which violate democratic principles and human rights.

Calls on:

- The EU Commission to strongly oppose violence or election rigging, making this clear to the Georgian government
- The Renew Europe group in the European parliament to mobilise the backing of the implementation of

the resolution of the European Parliament.

- Imposing personal sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili and his family for steering Georgia away from the EU and NATO and towards authoritarianism;
- An end to Georgian Dream's disinformation campaign against EU countries and organisations supporting democracy in Georgia;
- The cessation of political prosecution and the release of political prisoners, including ex-president Saakashvili;
- Dropping cases against activists and demonstrators who protested the "Russian law" and annulment of their penalties;
- Immediate initiation of EU accession negotiations right after the elections as soon as new democratic government commits to reforms and the fulfilment of the nine conditions;
- Increased EU and European country support for civil society in Georgia, along with enhanced election monitoring;
- The European Commission to duplicate sanctions already imposed by the US and those anticipated from the EU on politicians with involvement in the 'Russian Law' and anti-democratic practices;
- Highest political bodies of the EU to refrain from high-level contacts with representatives of the Georgian Dream government.