

Joint Letter of Democracy and Human Rights Support Organisations on the Adoption of the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence in Georgia

7 June 2024, Brussels, Belgium

Ursula von der Leyen, the President of European Commission
Charles Michel, the President of the European Council
Josep Borrell Fontelles, the HRVP of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Roberta Metsola, the President of the European Parliament
Olivér Várhelyi, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement
Olof Skoog, EU Special Representative for Human Rights

Despite strong opposition from a substantial part of Georgian society tangibly evidenced in continuous large scale protests, the Georgian Parliament adopted the controversial Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence which threatens the functioning of civil society, independent media and individual activists in the country.

This legislation echoes concerning trends in authoritarian countries, including the foreign agents law in Russia, used to silence critical voices, weaken civil society and stifle dissent.

We, the undersigned human rights and democracy support organisations, express deep concern over the adoption of the repressive legislation which threatens Georgia's democracy. Since the regaining of Georgia's independence, international organisations, foreign experts, and democracy support donors have worked together with the government, civil society, and the Georgian people in support of Georgian democracy.

We stand in solidarity with the Georgian public and civil society peacefully protesting the repressive legislation and urge the international community to support the Georgian people's struggle for democracy. We therefore urge:

- the **Government of Georgia to unconditionally revoke the repressive bill** and resume its work towards the democratic reform agenda detailed in the nine steps of the EU Commission in the context of opening negotiations.

- The **EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Human Rights, Olof Skoog**, to organise a visit to Georgia amid the violent crackdown by riot police and security forces on peaceful protesters and civic activists and urge Georgian authorities to uphold their international human rights commitments, including those discussed at EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue.
- the **European Commission, European Council, European Parliament and EU member states** to consider foreign policy instruments at its disposal - primarily negative conditionality measures - including the Human Rights Sanction Regime to put political pressure on Georgian authorities.
- the **European Commission to step up its support to Georgian civil society by mobilising NDICI cushion funds** and rapid reaction funds to enable a rapid and comprehensive response to countering closing civic space, including by supporting human rights defenders, the transparency of campaign financing, independent media actors and citizen election observers.
- the **European Parliament's Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG)** to start consultations with the international election observation mission led by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) to ensure support and add political clout to the observation of elections in the country.

List of signatories:

1. Article 19
2. Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights
3. Brot für die Welt
4. Club de Madrid
5. Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy
6. Democracy Reporting International
7. Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
8. Elbarlement
9. European Partnership for Democracy
10. Free Press Unlimited
11. Human Rights Without Frontiers
12. ILGA-Europe
13. International Federation for Human Rights - FIDH

14. International Partnership for Human Rights
15. International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network (IPPF EN)
16. International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims
17. Netherlands Helsinki Committee
18. Political Parties of Finland for Democracy – Demo Finland
19. Protection International
20. The Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy
21. Westminster Foundation for Democracy