Resolution on the situation of the former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili

2023/2543(RSP) - 15/02/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 577 votes to 33, with 26 abstentions, a resolution on the situation of the former President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR groups and Members.

As a reminder, former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili was detained in October 2021 upon his return to Georgia following an eight-year exile. In 2018, he was convicted in absentia by a Georgian court to a six-year prison term for abuse of power while in office, charges that Mikheil Saakashvili denied and qualified as politically motivated.

Parliament expressed its grave concern about the deteriorating health of former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, who has been detained in a prison hospital. The resolution underlined reports of dramatic weight loss and suggestions that he might have suffered from heavy metal poisoning while in detention. The Georgian authorities have so far rejected the many public calls to release Mikheil Saakashvili and allow him to receive medical treatment abroad. They have also declined requests by Members of the European Parliament, international experts and even the Public Defender of Georgia to visit Mikheil Saakashvili in prison.

Expressing grave concern about the inadequate response by the Georgian authorities so far, Parliament called for the release of Mr Saakashvili and for him to receive proper medical treatment abroad and to respect his fundamental rights and personal dignity. Members urged current President Salome Zourabichvili to use her constitutional right to pardon him.

The European Council and the Commission are urged to become more actively involved in securing the release of former President Mikheil Saakashvili.

The resolution stressed the fact that the continuing failure to improve the situation of former President Mikheil Saakashvili will continue to damage Georgia’s reputation and hamper its European Union candidacy prospects. According to Parliament, the continued detention of Mikhail Saakashvili only deepens the rift between the government and opposition and erodes public trust in democratic institutions.