

# Resolution on attempts to reintroduce a foreign agent law in Georgia and its restrictions on civil society

2024/2703(RSP) - 25/04/2024 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 425 votes 25, with 30 abstentions, a resolution on attempts to reintroduce a foreign agent law in Georgia and its restrictions on civil society.

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

On 17 April 2024, the Georgian Parliament passed the so-called transparency of foreign influence law at first reading with 83 votes in favour and none against, despite mass protests by Georgian citizens, criticism from the President of Georgia, who called the draft law ‘sabotage of the country’s European path’, national and international condemnation and repeated calls from Georgia’s European partners to withdraw the draft law. This law would require organisations receiving over 20 % of their funding from abroad to register within two months as ‘organisations pursuing the interests of a foreign power’ and label themselves as such.

Parliament strongly condemned the re-introduction of the controversial draft law on ‘transparency of foreign influence’ which would impose debilitating restrictions on civil society and independent media and thereby undermine the possibility of their operating freely, and has therefore been met with massive protests by the Georgian public, civil society organisations, independent media, prominent public figures and the country’s European and international partners alike.

The draft law is incompatible with EU values and democratic principles, runs against Georgia’s ambitions for EU membership, damages Georgia’s international reputation and endangers the country’s Euro-Atlantic integration.

The resolution stressed that EU accession negotiations should not be opened as long as this law is part of Georgia’s legal order.

The Georgian Government is called on to:

- halt the parliamentary proceedings leading to adoption of the law and abstain from submitting any further legislative proposals that contradict the principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms and which would therefore run counter to the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership;
- respect Georgian citizens’ constitutional rights;
- guarantee an enabling environment in which civil society and independent media can thrive;
- return to its European path, uphold its commitment to respect, strengthen and promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and genuinely engage in the full implementation of the steps required to fulfil the conditions for candidate status and EU membership;
- release former President Mikheil Saakashvili on humanitarian grounds and to allow him to receive proper medical treatment abroad.

Parliament called on the Commission to:

- submit an interim assessment of Georgia's progress;
- promptly assess the impact of Georgia's planned 'foreign agent' law on Georgia's continuous fulfilment of the visa liberalisation benchmarks, in particular the fundamental rights benchmark, a crucial component of the EU visa liberalisation policy;
- assess the impact of this draft law on the EU's role as a donor in Georgia and to communicate clearly to the Georgian Government and Parliament about this possible impact and its consequences for EU funding in general.