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Challenge, on substantive grounds, of the still unratified credentials of the parliamentary delegation of Georgia

Report[1]
Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee)
Rapporteur: Ms Zanda KALNIŅA-LUKAŠEVICA, Latvia, Group of the European People's Party

Summary

The Monitoring Committee considers that developments since the 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections, including violations of the freedom of assembly and expression and the crackdown on the opposition and civil society, are in contradiction to Georgia's membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe.

The committee therefore wants clear assurances from the authorities that they are genuinely committed to reversing the democratic backsliding and fulfilling their membership obligations.

However, the committee suggests that, as a signal of its openness to maintaining dialogue, the Assembly, pending a reconsideration of the Georgian delegation's credentials at its April 2025 part-session, ratify at this part-session the credentials of the Georgian delegation, while insisting that the Georgian authorities immediately implement a number of conditions, including: initiating an inclusive process; urgently addressing the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections and creating an electoral environment that is conducive to genuinely democratic new elections announced in the coming months; putting an immediate end to police brutality and human rights abuses; effectively investigating these practices and ending the misuse of legal proceedings as a means of deterring or retaliating against protesters, journalists and civic leaders; fully respecting the right to freedom of expression and assembly; and releasing all political prisoners before the April 2025 part-session.

At the same time, the committee suggests that, as a clear sign of its condemnation of the police brutality and other human rights abuses, which so far have not been addressed by the authorities, the Assembly resolves to suspend several rights of the Georgian delegation.

1. Reference to Committee: Assembly decision. Reference 4851 of 27 January 2025.

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A. Draft resolution[2]

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that by acceding to the Council of Europe on 27 January 1999, Georgia agreed to honour several specific commitments listed in Assembly Opinion 209 (1999), as well as the obligations incumbent on all member States under Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (STE No. 1): compliance with the principles of pluralist democracy and the rule of law as well as respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons placed under its jurisdiction.

2. In its Resolution 2561 (2024) "Challenges to democracy in Georgia", the Assembly already expressed its deep concern at the continuing and rapid backsliding of democracy in Georgia. Noting that the 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections would be a *de facto* referendum on Georgia's democratic trajectory and foreign alignment, the Assembly reiterated its commitment to co-operation and dialogue with all forces and civil society in Georgia "to reverse the recent backsliding and to uphold the honouring of Georgia's membership obligations and commitments to the Council of Europe".

3. The latest developments confirm the Assembly's concerns. The findings of the Assembly's election observation delegation "raise concerns about the correctness of the election results, namely whether the election results truly reflect the will of the voters. Additionally, serious doubts persist regarding whether the electoral environment provided the necessary conditions for a fair election, enabling voters to make an informed choice free from intimidation and undue pressure. This is reflected in the response from the opposition and civil society, which have expressed deep mistrust in both the results and the institutions and continue to challenge the outcome of the election". Following the elections, large demonstrations erupted in Georgia, with opposition parties boycotting parliament and asking for a rerun of the vote.

4. Street demonstrations took even larger proportions following the announcement that the government would suspend Georgia's European Union accession process. This decision, which is contrary to the ruling party's electoral promises, has resulted in a social crisis characterised by a complete breakdown of trust in the political institutions of the country in the eyes of the Georgian society, which compromises their legitimacy. It is also bound to have an impact on the introduction of much needed reforms that would help tackle Georgia's democratic backsliding.

5. The Assembly condemns the human rights abuses committed by the police, including the brutal use of force against demonstrators, in violation of freedom of assembly, in the context of a progressive erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms, the dismantling of democratic safeguards, the shrinking space for civil society and the politicisation of State institutions that began well before these elections. It also condemns the misuse of the judicial system to deter and retaliate against protesters, journalists and opposition figures, issues which so far remain unaddressed by the authorities.

6. In this respect, the Assembly asks the Georgian authorities to take into account the recommendations to be made by the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) in its urgent Opinion on the Law on Administrative Offenses, requested by the President of the Assembly. Likewise, the Assembly reiterates its call on the authorities to repeal the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence in its current form, to protect freedom of assembly and expression and to ensure accountability for human rights violations and end stigmatisation of NGOs, as highlighted also by the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights during his visit to Georgia in January 2025.

7. In the Assembly's view, Georgia's political deadlock and breach of trust between the authorities and civil society can be overcome only through:

7.1. a clear recommitment of the Georgian authorities to Council of Europe values and standards and further European integration in line with the European aspirations of the majority of the Georgian people;

7.2. a reinforced process of engagement with the Council of Europe, involving the Georgian authorities as well as a wide range of other Georgian stakeholders;

7.3. an inclusive political process in Georgia involving all stakeholders and social actors, including opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections;

7.4. ensuring accountability for all law enforcement officials involved in violent crackdowns against peaceful protesters, beatings, mistreatment, torture and arbitrary arrest;

2. Draft resolution adopted by the committee on 28 January 2025.

7.5. the release of all political prisoners.

8. In this regard, the Assembly recalls the visit which the Secretary General of the Council of Europe carried out in Tbilisi in December 2024, following which a number of initiatives were launched.

9. Similarly, the Assembly recalls that its co-rapporteurs of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) visited Georgia in January 2025, and met interlocutors from the Georgian institutions, as well as all political forces, NGOs and civil society.

10. Developments since the 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections, including violations of the freedom of assembly and expression and the crackdown on the opposition and civil society, are in contradiction to Georgia's membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe. The Assembly therefore needs clear assurances from the authorities that they are genuinely committed to reversing the democratic backsliding and fulfilling their membership obligations.

11. In the light of these considerations and as a signal of its own openness to maintaining dialogue, the Assembly, pending a reconsideration of the Georgian delegation's credentials and an overall re-assessment of the situation in the country at its April 2025 part-session, decides to ratify at this part-session the credentials of the Georgian delegation while, at the same time, insisting that the Georgian authorities:

11.1. immediately initiate an inclusive process involving all stakeholders and social actors, including the ruling majority, opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections and to create an electoral environment that is conducive to genuinely democratic new elections announced during the coming months;

11.2. take immediate and effective steps to enable Georgia to resume the European integration process, in line with the European aspirations of the people, and to accelerate with determination the necessary reforms;

11.3. put an immediate end to police brutality and human rights abuses, effectively investigate these practices and end the misuse of legal proceedings as a means of deterring or retaliating against protesters, journalists and civic leaders, and fully respect the right to freedom of expression and assembly;

11.4. step up co-operation with the Council of Europe and engage in good faith in the process initiated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

11.5. address, without delay, the concerns and recommendations of the Assembly expressed in Resolution 2438 (2022) and Resolution 2561 (2024), including the recommendation to revoke the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, and the concerns about the Law on Administrative Offences, which should be addressed by taking into account the urgent opinions of the Venice Commission;

11.6. release all political prisoners before the 2025 April part-session of the Assembly;

11.7. continue to engage fully with the Assembly's monitoring procedure.

12. At the same time, as a clear sign of its condemnation of the police brutality and other human rights abuses, which so far have not been addressed by the authorities, the Assembly resolves to suspend the following rights of the members of the Georgian delegation:

12.1. right to be full member or alternate of the following committees: the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, the Monitoring Committee, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities, and Institutional Affairs;

12.2. right to be a member of election observation committees;

12.3. right to be appointed rapporteur;

12.4. right to be a candidate for the office of the President of the Assembly, chairperson or vice-chairperson of a committee or a sub-committee;

12.5. right to represent the Assembly in Council of Europe bodies by Bureau decision, and right to represent the Assembly on an occasional basis (by Bureau or committee decision) at events, meetings, conferences organised by Council of Europe bodies, international organisations or interparliamentary assemblies.

13. The Assembly further resolves to explore ways of strengthening the participation of Georgian extra-parliamentarian opposition and civil society in its actions with regard to Georgia, including within the framework of the Monitoring Committee.

14. The Assembly will have the opportunity to reconsider the credentials of the Georgian delegation, including the suspension of the above-mentioned rights, at its April 2025 part-session, in the light of progress achieved in relation to the issues mentioned in paragraph 11, under the conditions provided for in Rule 9 of its Rules of Procedure

B. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica, rapporteur

1. Introduction

1. On 27 January 2025, with the support of more than 30 members of the Parliamentary Assembly present in the Chamber belonging to at least five national delegations, Ms Boriana Åberg (Sweden, EPP/CD) challenged the still unratified credentials of the Georgian delegation on substantive grounds on the basis of Article 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.

2. The substantive grounds on the basis of which the credentials were challenged are the assertion that the 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections and subsequent developments, including violations of the freedom of assembly and expression and the crackdown on the opposition and civil society, are in contradiction to Georgia's membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe.

3. In line with Article 8.3 of the Rules of Procedure, the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee) was seized for report and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs for opinion.

4. At its meeting on 27 January 2025, the Monitoring Committee appointed me rapporteur.

2. Membership obligations and accession commitments

5. Upon accession, Georgia undertook to honour the obligations incumbent on all member States under Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1) with regard to pluralist democracy, the rule of law and human rights. In addition, it undertook to honour a number of specific commitments listed in Opinion 209 (1999) “Georgia's application for membership of the Council of Europe”, adopted by the Assembly on 27 January 1999.

6. On 24 May 2024, the Assembly Standing Committee held current affairs debate entitled “Recent challenges to democracy in Georgia” after hearing statements by the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, Mr Shalva Papuashvili, and the Vice-President of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and member in respect of the Czech Republic, Ms Veronika Bílková.

7. On 27 June 2024, the Assembly adopted, following a debate under urgent procedure, Resolution 2561 (2024) “Challenges to democracy in Georgia”. In this Resolution, the Assembly expressed its deep concern about “the country’s commitment to international democratic norms and Euro-Atlantic integration, and about its willingness to honour its membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe”. Noting that the 26 October 2024 parliamentary elections would be a *de facto* referendum on Georgia’s democratic trajectory and foreign alignment, the Assembly reiterated its commitment to co-operation and dialogue with all forces and civil society in Georgia “to reverse the recent backsliding and to uphold the honouring of Georgia’s membership obligations and commitments to the Council of Europe”.

8. Parliamentary elections took place in Georgia on 26 October 2024. Regrettably, these elections did not fully comply with European norms and standards for democratic elections. The International Election Observation Mission, of which the Assembly was a part, noted that the elections took place in an extremely polarised and divisive electoral environment, with persistent reports of widespread pressure on voters, especially public sector employees, as well as extensive tracking of voters on election day combined with frequent instances of compromised voting secrecy which raised concerns about the ability of voters to vote freely without fear of retribution.[3] In addition, and worrisomely in the context of the disputed election results, the final report of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which observed the post-election proceedings, concluded that: “Overall, the handling of post-election day complaints by election commissions and courts undermined the right to due process, failed to provide an effective remedy, and did not comprehensively address widespread concerns about the integrity of election results”.[4] The manner in which the election complaints have been handled raises serious questions about the independence of the judiciary and the political control over it, confirming concerns already raised in the last monitoring report to the Assembly.

3. International Elections Observation: Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions.
4. Georgia, Parliamentary elections, 26 October 2024: Final Report, OSCE, p. 4 § 4.

9. These serious shortcomings in electoral conduct led Mr Iulian Bulai (Romania, ALDE), Chairman of the Assembly *ad hoc* Committee to observe the elections, to conclude in his report to the Assembly that there were serious concerns about the "correctness of the election results, namely whether the election results truly reflect the will of the voters. Additionally, serious doubts persist regarding whether the electoral environment provided the necessary conditions for a fair election, enabling voters to make an informed choice free from intimidation and undue pressure."[5]

10. Widespread popular protests broke out following the announcement of the results of the elections. The Georgian opposition, as well as the President of Georgia, Ms Zourabichvili, refused to recognise the outcome of these elections, citing widespread electoral fraud, including through intimidation of voters and violations of the voting secrecy. On these grounds, the President of Georgia, as well as several individual MPs, challenged the results of the elections, and the legality of the mandates of all 150 MPs, before the Constitutional Court. All four opposition parties that passed the threshold for entering parliament announced that they would not do so. Three of these opposition parties, namely "Coalition for Change", "Unity-National Movement", and "Strong Georgia" have asked the Central Election Commission (CEC) to cancel their party list and requested that the parliament invalidate their mandates. While making it clear that it does not recognise the legitimacy of the new parliament and will not participate in its proceedings, former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia's "For Georgia" party did not formally ask for its lists to be cancelled or its mandates revoked. The CEC cancelled the three respective lists on 26 November 2024 and the Georgian parliament is set to decide on the revocation of the mandates at its February 2025 Session. The decision of the combined opposition not to enter the new parliament has removed an important institutional mechanism for resolving the ongoing social and political crisis in Georgia. It should be recalled that the Assembly, irrespective of the merits or the grounds for such a decision, has always been very cautious and even reluctant about supporting parliamentary boycotts.

11. On 13 December 2024, the nine MPs of Georgian Dream who form the People's Power faction announced that they would leave the ruling majority and enter into opposition on the ground that, even if "*there are no fundamental disagreements with the majority"* the country needs a "*healthy opposition*".[6] While their nature as genuine opposition is questioned in Georgia, they were recognised as the opposition in parliament and provided with the reserved posts and other privileges for opposition parties.

12. The first meeting of the new parliament took place on 25 November 2024. The legitimacy of its convocation was questioned by the opposition, as well as several constitutional lawyers, on the grounds that the new parliament could not have been convened before the Constitutional Court had given its decision on the legitimacy of all 150 MPs.[7] This raised questions about the legality of the decisions taken by the newly convened parliament including its call for presidential election on 14 December 2024.[8] On 14 December, an election panel that was fully controlled by Georgian Dream unanimously elected Mr Kavelashvili as President of Georgia; he ran unopposed and is known for his hardline positions and anti-Western rhetoric. The legitimacy of his election is not recognised by Ms Zourabichvili and the opposition in Georgia, nor by a significant proportion of the population, who still consider Ms Zourabichvili to be the legitimate President of the country.

13. The situation escalated and dramatically changed on 28 November 2024 following the ruling majority's announcement that it would pause all efforts to open accession negotiations with the European Union until 2028 and therewith *de facto* suspending Georgia's EU integration process, against its explicit election promise that it would be the guarantor of rapid EU accession. This decision led to a dramatic increase, both in number and size, of round-the-clock large-scale demonstrations in Tbilisi and many other cities and towns in Georgia. These protests were increasingly met with police brutality and retaliation against protesters and opposition, which only seemed to galvanise the protests and transformed them into a social movement in favour of the country's European direction and for an end to the polarised, radical zero-sum political environment.

14. The suspension of the EU accession process, as well as the increasing police brutality against protesters and journalists and the crackdown on opposition voices, were strongly condemned by the international community, including the Assembly. On 29 November 2024, the Assembly Standing Committee strongly condemned "the brutal repression of the peaceful demonstrations" in violation of the fundamental

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5. Doc. 16079, § 77
6. Civil Georgia , 23 January 2025, "People's Power" Stages Move into "Opposition" – Civil Georgia.
7. Only on 3 December 2024 did the Constitutional Court reject the appeal of President Zourabichvili and opposition members.
8. According to legal provisions, "the decree of the Parliament recognising the powers of MPs shall not include the name of a person, the legality of whose election as an MP has been appealed to the Constitutional Court of Georgia." At the same time, according to the same provisions, Parliament must recognise the credentials of at least two-thirds of all 150 MPs to begin its work.

rights to freedom of expression and assembly. It urged "Georgia to remain faithful to *European values and to fully comply with its obligations and commitments as a member State of the Council of Europe*" and expressed its continuing readiness to work, "in close co-operation with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Committee of Ministers, in a constructive dialogue with the Georgian authorities, democratic forces and civil society, in particular youth",[9] to achieve those objectives.

15. The developments in Georgia have been marred by police brutality and disproportional use of force against demonstrators, as well as journalists and civil leaders. In addition, there are increasing reports of violent attacks against protesters and journalists by so-called "titushky" (unidentified masked thugs) with the police idly standing by. The Georgian Public Defender (Ombudsman) has publicly denounced the police brutality as torture. In addition, there have been numerous arrests of opposition and protest leaders and searches of their offices and houses. In total, more than 400 persons have been arrested for their participation in the demonstrations. Many of these arrests have taken place on the basis of provisions in the controversial code of administrative offences[10] which is prone to political abuse. In the light of these concerns, the President of the Assembly requested, on 23 December 2024, an urgent opinion of the Venice Commission on the compliance with Council of Europe standards of the Georgian law on Administrative Offences, in particular with reference to freedom of assembly. The Venice Commission has already started its work on this opinion. Recently, there has been an increase in criminal proceedings against demonstrators. These developments have raised questions about politically motivated prosecution and the abuse of judicial powers to repress or retaliate against dissent and protest.[11]

16. The human rights and judicial abuse against demonstrators, journalists and opposition members has been strongly condemned by the international community, including the Monitoring Committee co-rapporteurs, who issued a statement[12] on 10 December 2024 condemning the police violence and expressing concern about possible politically motivated administration of justice. On 19 December 2024, 38 participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) invoked the so-called "Vienna Mechanism" in response to concerns about freedom of peaceful assembly, arbitrary arrests and detentions, targeting of political opposition and targeting of journalists, and mistreatment that may constitute torture.[13] In addition, the EU and most of its member States have maintained a policy of *de facto* non-co-operation and non-engagement with the Georgian authorities in protest against the police brutality and violations of the rights to freedom of expression and freedom of assembly.

17. Dialogue and contacts between the Council of Europe and the Georgian authorities, all democratic forces and civil society have continued extensively in order to seek a solution to the ongoing crisis. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Alain Berset, visited Georgia from 18 to 20 December 2024.[14] The co-rapporteurs of the Monitoring Committee, Mr Claude Kern (France, ALDE) and Ms Edite Estrela (Portugal, SOC) carried out a fact-finding visit to Georgia from 14 to 16 January 2025.[15] In addition, the Commissioner for Human Rights visited Georgia from 21 to 23 January 2025.[16]

3. Current situation and possible way forward

18. The political and constitutional crisis that developed after the elections has turned into a deep social crisis following the suspension of the EU integration process by the ruling majority, against the aspirations and interests of the Georgian population. The crisis is characterised by a complete breakdown of trust in the political institutions of the country in the eyes of the Georgian society, compromising their legitimacy.

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9. Statement by the Assembly Standing Committee, 29 November 2024, "Georgia must remain faithful to its European values".
10. In its most recent report on the honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia (Doc. 15497), the Assembly concluded that this law "dates from the Soviet era and its complete revision is long overdue. Many of its provisions have already been judged as unconstitutional by Georgia's Constitutional Court, while reportedly several other provisions would suffer the same fate if challenged before it. As a result, the legal framework allows for overbroad application of administrative detention, as well as excessively high fines, and is vulnerable to abuse."
11. Civil Georgia, 23 January 2025, "Watchdog Says Criminal Code is Used Punitively Against Protesters".
12. Statement by the co-rapporteurs, 10 December 2024.
13. Joint Statement on the Human Rights Situation in Georgia – US Mission to the OSCE.
14. Secretary General concludes visit to Georgia.
15. PACE monitoring co-rapporteurs to visit Georgia from 14 to 16 January.
16. "Georgia: Protect freedom of assembly and expression, ensure accountability for human rights violations and end stigmatisation of NGOs and LGBTI people", Commissioner for Human Rights.

19. The daily protests and demonstrations in Tbilisi, as well as in other cities in Georgia, are continuing unabated and for the moment show no signs of slowing down. It is important to note that these demonstrations are largely society-driven and spontaneous. They represent a social movement that is neither controlled nor led by political opposition parties. As a result, the space for manoeuvring by any political party is limited, and any solution to the ongoing crisis needs to involve and include these social actors and civil society.

20. The situation is currently a complete political stalemate, with neither side willing or able to move beyond their respective positions. The core demands of the opposition and civil society are the organisation of new elections and the release of all arrested protesters. Many explicitly reject any form of domestic or international mediation beyond these core demands, citing their experience with the failed agreement brokered by former EU Council President Charles Michel following the 2020 elections, from which Georgian Dream withdrew soon after it was signed, as an ominous example. For its part, the ruling majority maintains that it represents the will of the people and therefore has the mandate to implement policies and decisions as it sees necessary for the country. It has dismissed demands by the European Union for legal and political reforms as political blackmail, and makes no secret of its desire to disband the opposition, which it considers to be foreign-funded representatives of an undefined global war party aiming to draw the country into an all-out war with the Russian Federation.

21. In these circumstances, the crisis of trust and legitimacy of the political institutions may only be resolved by the Georgian society itself. In a democratic society, the most appropriate, and possibly only, response to such a deep social and political schism is to refer the matter to its citizens through democratic elections. However, it is clear that new elections, without first resolving the many shortcomings and deficiencies in the electoral environment that were noted by domestic and international elections observers, would not resolve the current crisis in Georgia. The first step should therefore be the start of an inclusive process involving all stakeholders and social actors, including the ruling majority, opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections and to create an electoral environment that is conducive to genuinely democratic new elections. This would also provide a limited, but well-defined, framework for interaction between the different sides.

22. However, it is clear that such an inclusive process cannot take place under the conditions of police brutality and oppression and retaliation against protesters, journalists and political representatives. In order to create the preconditions for the resolution of the ongoing crisis, the authorities should put an immediate end to these practises, which are incompatible with Georgia’s obligations as a member State of the Council of Europe and release those arrested or detained on remand.

4. Conclusions

23. Developments since the 26 October 2023 parliamentary elections, including violations of the freedom of assembly and expression and the crackdown on the opposition and civil society, are in contradiction to Georgia's membership obligations and accession commitments to the Council of Europe. The Assembly therefore needs clear assurances from the authorities that they are genuinely committed to reversing the democratic backsliding and fulfilling their membership obligations.

Option A

24. In light of these considerations and as a signal of its own openness to maintaining dialogue, the Assembly, pending a reconsideration of the Georgian delegation’s credentials and an overall re-assessment of the situation in the country at its April 2025 part-session, should decide to ratify at this part-session the credentials of the Georgian delegation while, at the same time, insisting that the Georgian authorities:

24.1. immediately initiate an inclusive process involving all stakeholders and social actors, including the ruling majority, opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections and to create an electoral environment that is conducive to genuinely democratic new elections;

24.2. take immediate and effective steps to enable Georgia to resume the European Union accession process, in line with the European aspirations of the people, and to accelerate with determination the necessary reforms;

24.3. put an immediate end to police brutality and human rights abuses, effectively investigate these practices and end the misuse of legal proceedings as a means of deterring or retaliating against protesters, journalists and civic leaders, and fully respect the right to freedom of expression and assembly;

24.4. step up co-operation with the Council of Europe and engage in good faith in the process initiated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe;

24.5. address, without delay, the concerns and recommendations of the Assembly expressed in Resolution 2438 (2022) and Resolution 2561 (2024), including the recommendation to repeal the Law on Foreign Influence in its current form, and the concerns about the Law on Administrative Offences, which should be addressed by taking into account the upcoming urgent opinion of the Venice Commission;

24.6. continue to engage fully with the Assembly's monitoring procedure.

25. At the same time, as a clear sign of its condemnation of the police brutality and other human rights abuses, which so far have not been addressed by the authorities, the Assembly should suspend the following rights of the members of the Georgian delegation:

25.1. right to be full member or alternate of the following committees: the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, the Monitoring Committee, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, the Committee on the Election of Judges to the European Court of Human Rights and the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities, and Institutional Affairs;

25.2. right to be a member of election observation committees;

25.3. right to be appointed rapporteur;

25.4. right to be a candidate for the office of the President of the Assembly, chairperson or vice-chairperson of a committee or a sub-committee;

25.5. right to represent the Assembly in Council of Europe bodies by Bureau decision, and right to represent the Assembly on an occasional basis (by Bureau or committee decision) at events, meetings, conferences organised by Council of Europe bodies, international organisations or interparliamentary assemblies.

26. The Assembly should furthermore explore ways of strengthening the participation of Georgian extra-parliamentarian opposition and civil society in its actions with regard to Georgia, including within the framework of the Monitoring Committee.

27. The Assembly will have the opportunity to reconsider the credentials of the Georgian delegation, including the suspension of the above-mentioned rights, at its April 2025 part-session, in the light of progress achieved in relation to the issues mentioned in paragraph 11**,** under the conditions provided for in Rule 9 of its Rules of Procedure.

Option B

28. Therefore, the Assembly should not ratify the credentials of the Georgian delegation.

29. Furthermore, the Assembly should demand that the Georgian authorities:

29.1. immediately initiate an inclusive process involving all stakeholders and social actors, including the ruling majority, opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections and to create an electoral environment that is conducive to genuinely democratic new elections;

29.2. take immediate and effective steps to enable Georgia to resume the European Union accession process, in line with the European aspirations of the people, and to accelerate with determination the necessary reforms;

29.3. put an immediate end to police brutality and human rights abuses, effectively investigate these practices and end the misuse of legal proceedings as a means of deterring or retaliating against protesters, journalists and civic leaders, and fully respect the right to freedom of expression and assembly;

29.4. address, without delay, the concerns and recommendations of the Assembly expressed in Resolution 2438 (2022) and Resolution 2561 (2024), including the recommendation to repeal the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence in its current form, and the concerns about the Law on Administrative Offences, which should be addressed by taking into account the urgent opinion of the Venice Commission;

29.5. step up co-operation with the Council of Europe and engage in good faith in the process initiated by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe

30. The Assembly should explore ways of strengthening the participation of Georgian extra-parliamentarian opposition and civil society in its actions with regard to Georgia, including within the framework of the Monitoring Committee.