Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 2585 (2025)[1]

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

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly recalls that, by acceding to the Council of Europe on 27 April 1999, Georgia agreed to honour several specific commitments listed in Assembly Opinion 209 (1999) "Georgia's application for membership of the Council of Europe", as well as the obligations incumbent on all member States under Article 3 of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1): compliance with the principles of pluralist democracy and the rule of law, as well as respect for the 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 political 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 in its report on the observation of the parliamentary elections in Georgia (26 October 2024) "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 on 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 Georgian society's trust in the political institutions of the country, 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.

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1. *Assembly debate* on 29 January 2025 (6th sitting) (see Doc. 16104, report of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee), rapporteur: Ms Zanda Kalniņa-Lukaševica; see also Doc. 16107, opinion of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs, rapporteur: Ms Petra Bayr). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 29 January 2025 (6th sitting).

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 the urgent opinion on amendments to the Code of Administrative Offences 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, protect freedom of assembly and expression, ensure accountability for human rights violations and end stigmatisation of non-governmental organisations (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 the breach of trust between the authorities and civil society can be overcome only through:

7.1. a clear recommitment by 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 the opposition and civil society, to urgently address the deficiencies and shortcomings noted during the recent parliamentary elections;

7.4. the organisation of new, genuinely democratic, parliamentary elections, held under strict international monitoring and conditions of political independence of State institutions and election administration;

7.5. ensuring that all law-enforcement officials involved in violent crackdowns against peaceful protesters, beatings, mistreatment, torture and arbitrary arrests will be held accountable;

7.6. the release of all political prisoners.

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

9. Similarly, the Assembly recalls that the 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 Georgian institutions, as well as all political forces, NGOs and civil society.

10. Developments since the parliamentary elections on 26 October 2024, including violations of 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 reassessment 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 new, genuinely democratic, parliamentary elections to be 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) "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Georgia" and Resolution 2561 (2024) "Challenges to democracy in Georgia", including the recommendation to repeal the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence and the concerns about the Code of Administrative Offences, which should be addressed by taking into account the urgent opinion 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 and work to ensure that monitoring mechanisms function effectively during the pre-election period, thereby ensuring timely warning of any democratic decline.

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

12.3. the right to be appointed rapporteur;

12.4. the 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. the right to represent the Assembly in Council of Europe bodies (by decision of the Bureau), and the right to represent the Assembly on an occasional basis (by decision of the Bureau or committee) 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-parliamentary 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.