Georgia: EU report highlights the need for political compromise to continue the reform momentum

Brussels, 9 February 2021

Georgia remains committed to the implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, despite the COVID-19 related challenges. Further efforts are however needed, notably in the field of judicial reform and tackling political polarisation. These are key findings of the European Union’s annual Association Implementation Report on Georgia, published today ahead of the next EU-Georgia Association Council on 16 March. The report outlines Georgia's implementation of reforms under the EU-Georgia Association Agreement over the past year.

"We appreciate Georgia’s continued reform progress and commitment to our bilateral relationship, as well as to the Eastern Partnership. Following the 2020 Parliamentary elections, it is of vital importance that all Georgian political parties act within the institutional framework to find common ground and a way forward from the current political situation. This would enable the Georgian Parliament to take resolute action for a sustainable recovery from COVID-19 and for advancing the wider reform agenda. We are also working well with our Georgian partners towards agreeing an updated Association Agenda to equip us for the coming years”, said High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell.

Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhelyi, added: “The EU has stood by the Georgian people since the start of the pandemic. We mobilised €183 million of grants for COVID-19 related assistance to Georgia last year, in addition to €150 million in macro-financial assistance. We will continue to assist Georgia in its economic recovery and in taking forward the reform agenda to fully implement and reap the benefits of the Association Agreement. Improving connectivity and the business environment remain crucial in this context and are key for boosting investments.”

Key findings

Today's report, prepared by the European External Action Service and the European Commission services, shows that Georgia remains committed to the obligations and undertakings of the Association Agreement. Alignment to the EU acquis, as well as to European standards has continued effectively. However, challenges remain in the areas of electoral reform and reform of the judiciary.

The prevailing situation following the 2020 Parliamentary elections demonstrates the need for further democratic consolidation, including by addressing the final recommendations of OSCE/ODIHR, through an inclusive dialogue and in good time for the October 2021 local elections. In the short-term, an inclusive political agreement between the majority and opposition parties is needed to enable work in Parliament to advance the important reform agenda. More broadly, tackling the polarisation in Georgian politics and media remains a priority.

Ensuring the independence and accountability of the judiciary remains a key challenge. It is essential that the selection procedure for Supreme Court Judges is brought fully in line with the recommendations of the Council of Europe Venice Commission and is carried out in a transparent manner and ensuring a genuinely merit-based process, before further appointments are made.

With the EU as Georgia's largest trading partner, the country has further aligned its legislation with EU standards and norms to facilitate trade flows. Looking ahead, it will be crucial to ensure an inclusive, green and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and to make further progress on digitalisation and digital literacy. Structural reforms remain important as they enhance Georgia's investment climate and trade potential and make its economy less vulnerable to external factors.

The EU strongly supports of Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, including by continuing the efforts of the EU Special Representative, its engagement as co-chair in the Geneva International Discussions and the sustained presence on the ground of the EU Monitoring Mission.

For More Information

2021 Association Implementation Report on Georgia
Factsheet - EU-Georgia relations
EU Delegation to Georgia

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