



European Council
Cabinet of the President

SGS 22 / 05214

Brussels, 23 -11- 2022

Dear Civil Society and Media Companies representatives,

Thank you for your joint letter of 7 November, expressing concern about the conviction of Mr Nika Gvaramia.

We follow the court case of Mr Gvaramia closely, also through the EU Delegation in Tbilisi. The European Union does not comment on the merits of individual Court cases, however we note that questions have been raised, including from the Public Defender, about the Court's reasoning in Mr Gvaramia's case, both in terms of conviction and sentencing. In light of the Tbilisi Court of Appeal verdict of 2 November, the EU has issued the same day a spokesperson statement on the case of Mr Gvaramia: <https://europa.eu/!8jQMjD>.

Let me stress that fundamental rights and due legal process need to be respected, with transparent and fair judicial rulings, in line with the rule of law and international commitments, including the European Convention on Human Rights. The EU has repeatedly called on the Georgian authorities to engage in an inclusive and comprehensive reform of the judiciary. This is also one of the cornerstones of the 19 April 2021 political agreement and the recently adopted EU-Georgia Association Agenda.

Furthermore, one of the priorities underlined in the Commission's opinion on Georgia's application for EU membership is for Georgia to undertake stronger efforts to guarantee a free, professional, pluralistic and independent media environment, notably by ensuring that criminal proceedings against media owners comply with the highest legal standards.

The EU will continue to follow closely the developments and the wider justice reform and stands ready to support all meaningful efforts to implement the needed reforms in order to live up to the European aspirations of its citizens.

Yours faithfully,

Frédéric BERNARD
Head of Cabinet

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