

Statement of the Foreign and Security Policy Field Professionals on the Adoption by Georgian Parliament with the First Hearing of So-called Draft “Law on Foreign Agents”

March 9, 2023

We express our utmost concern on the consideration and adoption by Georgian parliament with the first hearing of so-called draft “Law on Foreign Agents”. This draft law goes against the national interests of Georgia.

The mentioned draft law and the process of its adoption aims at blocking through manipulations Georgia’s integration into NATO and EU – a clearly expressed will of Georgian citizens, as well as deepening the polarization and mutual hostility between different groups of Georgian society. This process is directed towards suppressing the critical voices, demonization and persecution of free media and the non-governmental sector. It is also anti-constitutional, as it undermines Georgia’s democratic development and the perspectives of joining NATO and EU – the priority defined by the constitution.

This political process further facilitates the state capture in Georgia, consolidates oligarch Ivanishvili’s autocratic, informal governance and strengthens Russian influence in the country.

The ruling party’s increasingly harsh criticism of our western partners, while fully ignoring very critical assessments of the mentioned draft law by NATO and EU, and in result the adoption of this law with the first hearing makes it clear that Georgian Dream and its sole informal leader Bidzina Ivanishvili is sacrificing Georgia's national interests for the sake of consolidatin of his authoritarian rule.

It is important to underline that amid Georgian government’s growing harassment of free media and independent NGOs, favorable conditions have been created for organizations promoting pro-Russian interests, among them Alt-info, Georgian partners of Gorchakov Foundation and Alliance of Patriots, while the origin of significant financial resources spent by them on anti-western activities have not been ascertained.

In summary, one can easily determine that Georgian Dream’s active implementation of the above policy destroys the future and democratic perspectives of our country and is turning it into authoritarian kleptocracy under the influence of Russia.

Stemming from all above, in order to avoid derailing Georgia from its path towards democracy and western integration, we, foreign and security policy field professionals, call on all citizens and organizations who support the democratic, European future of Georgia to unite against this Russian-style draft law that runs counter to the interests of Georgian state and carry

out all necessary peaceful actions and acts of protest to prevent Georgian Dream from its final adoption and implementation.

Simultaneously, we call on our friends and partners, the relevant higher structures of the EU and NATO, the diplomatic representations of the member countries of these organisations and the Swiss Confederation in Georgia, to support the strong desire of Georgian people to live in free, European state, and use all necessary measures and instruments, including imposing personal sanctions, to put maximum pressure on Bidzina Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream to ensure scrapping permanently the adoption-implementation process of this draft law and the return of Georgia to the path of democratic development and European integration.

This statement was ready for publishing when, after the mass peaceful protests of Georgian society and the violent dispersal of protestants, on 9th of March, parliamentary majority made a statement that it plans to withdraw the draft law. Despite the fact that this can be qualified as a success of the civic society of Georgia, stemming from that statement, according to which the ruling party intends to continue its mass propaganda aimed at promoting the draft law, it is obvious that Ivanishvili's regime, through its manipulative ways, and against the will of Georgian society, Georgia's national interests and the constitution of Georgia, plans to continue obstructing the process of the democratic development and western integration of Georgia.

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