

Speech Delivered by H.E. Salome Zourabichvili, President of Georgia May 26, 2024

Long live the independence of Georgia! May this day always be a joyous occasion. For this, we have work - ahead of us.

Today, our independence and our European path are inseparable and must be safeguarded collectively. You, the citizens of our nation, have grasped this truth most profoundly and have rallied in its defense on the streets! You let the world know that Georgia's European future has no alternative for its people. You demonstrated that Georgia has a strong, principled, free, intelligent, and national society, thereby already defeating nihilism and despair.

You are now anticipating a specific plan, and I fully recognize this responsibility that falls upon me (and I believe I hold this responsibility) to meet your expectations and together to draw a path that will guide us toward ourselves (in the first place) and at the same time toward Europe.

This path lies in the elections. We have to approach the elections of October 26th peacefully, with peace and stability! We must maintain the same level of mobilization and enthusiasm as before, while also ensuring the preservation of peace and stability.

Perhaps many today do not see the winning formula or are uncertain about which political force to place your hopes in. I understand that many do not trust pre-election promises and have largely lost faith in politicians due to our past (which is no one's fault). However, now is not the moment to succumb to nihilism, rivalry, or individual political ambitions.

In light of all these circumstances, I decided, on this day, to present an action plan of sorts - the "Georgian Charter." I invite political parties to unite around this Charter, agreeing to and pledging to fulfill all those matters necessary not only for European integration but also for the democracy of our country and the establishment of a fair state.

I have formulated and now present to you the action plan titled the "Georgian Charter"! I invite all political parties ready to fulfill the outlined obligations in the future parliament to sign this Charter. This cannot be just a spoken promise.

To fulfill this Charter and rebuild trust, a new political reality must be forged. This necessitates a distinct form of unity, a different parliament, different elections, and a different government!

Different Type of Unity: Unity without unification! A unity solely centered on this Charter and its implementation -that is unity around the European future. Consensus on this Charter does not require or imply a single electoral list or any other mandatory political alliances. Political parties

should determine their own election tactics and strategies once they have signed the Charter—that matter is not mine.

Different Type of Elections: The current political circumstances and electoral environment do not allow for ordinary elections to be held, where everyone will be given an opportunity to present its face, program, identity.

Because in these elections, we have to decide not who we vote for, but what we vote for! That is why these elections will, in reality, be a referendum - a referendum where we have to answer the following question: do we want Europe or not? And when we vote for any under-signatory party of this Charter, we are, in fact, voting for the "Georgian Charter" and, therefore, for a European future!

Different Type of Parliament: It will be a parliament elected for a specific term and tasked with implementing a specific European plan. This parliament should fulfill its obligations undertaken by signing this Charter within a short period of time. After that, it will return the mandate to the voters and hold extraordinary parliamentary elections in a new, free environment. This short-term mandate safeguards against the risks that concern the electorate – that no force is tempted to remain in power indefinitely.

Different Type of Government: It will be a completely new model of government. It will not be a government composed of political parties, but of distinguished, selected, and professional members of society. The process of compiling the government will be carried out in coordination with the President.

It is a path that is peaceful, purposeful, productive, and highly European. The Georgian people will make a decision through democratic elections, protecting us from destabilization and dangerous confrontations. Different opinions should be expressed at the polling station and not elsewhere or in any other form. This plan is our peaceful solution, and I take responsibility for protecting this path of survival and our return to Europe. Additionally, this plan will lead us to the benefits that our strategic friend, the United States, offers us today. This means we are returning to the foreign course declared and guaranteed by our Constitution.

I present and introduce to you the plan. Now, I ask you of patience as I read you the text of the charter so that everyone knows what conditions and obligations are involved.

Georgian Charter

The Georgian Charter reflects the demands and requests of society. In its essence and spirit, it also serves to take the main steps that are of existential importance to society today.

The steps, that the signatories to this Charter are undertaking the obligation to fulfill, also reflect the 9 points of the European recommendation.

These steps are:

1. Abolition of Laws Harmful to the European Course of the Country

We will immediately repeal all laws that contradict the European way and European recommendations. In particular, the law “on Transparency of Foreign Influence,” i.e., the Russian law, changes in the election code, the so-called wiretapping and offshore laws, and others.

We will also repeal the politically motivated cases against the demonstrators of the 2024 protests and will issue an amnesty.

2. Liberating the Justice System and Restoring Trust

➤ Liberating the Court

- We will liberate the court from clan rule by verifying the integrity of judges and inspecting the origins of undocumented properties.
- The inspection will be carried out on those judges whose politically motivated decisions have undermined trust in the court and tarnished its reputation.
- The inspection will be carried out on all members of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Council of Justice, the Supreme Court, as well as the presiding judges of the Court of Appeals and the City Court.
- Inspection will also be carried out on all new judges. New judges will be added to the court, which will eliminate overcrowding and eradicate term delay violations during case considerations.
- The electronic system of case distribution in the court will be fully implemented, in order to exclude political influences in the case distribution process.
- Judges will not be able to hold an administrative position for a second term.
- We will strengthen the mandate of the jury court and extend its jurisdiction to cases of high public interest.

➤ The Fundamental Reform of the Supreme Council of Justice Includes:

The excessive authority will be revoked, specifically:

- The right to initiate disciplinary proceedings, which is a mechanism for persecuting judges.
- The right to appoint chairpersons of administrative bodies.

- The School of Justice will be independent from the Council.
- The procedure for selecting judges of the Supreme Court will change: the Council will inspect candidates only according to the criteria established by the Constitution. It will submit a full list to the Parliament, which will elect them.

Members of the Council will be prohibited from:

- Holding other administrative positions.
- Being re-elected for a second term.

Non-judge members will have influence over important decisions within the Council.

3. Other priority steps of the reforms will involve:

➤ **The Prosecutor's Office**

- The Prosecutor General will be elected with a high quorum and will only serve for one term.
- The Prosecutorial Council will be strengthened.

➤ **State Security Service (SSSG) / Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)**

In order to deconcentrate power, a fundamental reform of the SSSG and the MIA will be carried out. Effective parliamentary control will be established over the activities of each institution, which will protect them from political influence.

➤ **Special Investigation Service**

We will strengthen and grant the institution real independence, in order for it to protect the citizens' rights during cases of violence perpetrated by the law enforcement authorities.

➤ **Anti-Corruption Agency**

- We will separate it from the executive power and provide it with real means. First and foremost, we will equip it with investigative powers over corruption cases.
- The head of the agency will be elected by the Parliament of Georgia and will be accountable to the Parliament.

➤ **National Bank**

- We will restore the independence of the National Bank by increasing the number of board members and creating a balance between the executive and non-executive members.
- We will exclude the possibility of adopting single-handed decisions.
- We will abolish the order issued single-handedly by the head of the National Bank that contradicts Georgia's international obligations.

➤ **Regulatory Bodies**

- We will liberate regulatory bodies from political influence and independent heads will be appointed in a democratic way.

4. Improving the Electoral System

Appropriate conditions will be created to hold free and fair elections:

The process of appointing the Chairperson of the CEC and the process of staffing the CEC will be improved, the barrier will be lowered, the possibility of creating electoral blocs will be restored, the rule of funding political parties will be reviewed, and the diaspora will be given the possibility to participate in the elections without hindrance.

Creating a New Political Reality

We, the signatories of this charter, those who will receive a mandate from the Georgian people in the elections of October 26, 2024, undertake the obligation and give the promise to fulfill the steps outlined in this Charter before the end of the very first spring session. Upon completion of these steps, snap parliamentary elections will be prepared and held in a free and fair environment.

Furthermore, we promise that the government, which will be responsible for executing this action plan, will be nominated by the President of Georgia.

I propose this plan to the political parties (to every political party that has a pretension to be pro-European and pro-Western party) to decide by June 1 whether they accept the responsibility of taking and fulfilling these steps before the Georgian people.

Then (and soon) comes the time of the election campaign, where the parties will be presented under this umbrella that unites the pro-European parties (together or separately, it is up to

them). On my part, I will present this plan and the new political model to our partners in Brussels, so we can restore the EU accession process and open accession negotiations as soon as possible.

This is not easy. This plan is in your hands. However, I believe that the Georgian people are ready to take a new step and enter Europe with accelerated pace.

Thank you!
Long live Georgia!