



## ADVISORY COUNCIL ON YOUTH (CCJ)

20 March 2023

*English only*

### **Statement of the Advisory Council on Youth Solidarity with youth civil society in Georgia**

On 7 March 2023, the members of the Parliament of Georgia passed a bill on 'Transparency of Foreign Influence' in its first reading. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe swiftly published a [statement](#) stating that legislation needs to be in line with "the Council of Europe standards on human rights, democracy, and the rule of law", and urging the Georgian authorities to "ensure a meaningful and peaceful political dialogue, with the participation of civil society".

Following widespread protests from tens of thousands of individuals, civil society organisations, and media outlets against the adoption of the bill, the Parliament of Georgia ultimately and unconditionally decided to withdraw it during its second reading, which was welcomed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe in a following [tweet](#). The Advisory Council on Youth (CCJ) praises the fast response of the activists standing up for the rights of civil society organisations to function independently and in co-operation with European peers.

In this statement, we reiterate Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 on *protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes*, stating that member States should:

- review their legal frameworks and update them where needed to ensure an environment which allows for a **strong and independent youth civil society** that is able to operate freely;
- **identify and address threats** to youth civil society and **to ensure that all young people and youth civil society can engage meaningfully with and in democratic political processes**; and
- empower all young people and youth civil society to contribute to shaping society by, among other things, [...] **providing support for organisational development and ensuring access to funding**.

The Advisory Council on Youth decisively calls upon the Council of Europe member States to honour the policy adopted, and continue working for safe spaces for youth civil society to flourish. The Council of Europe is built on the peaceful and fruitful collaboration of its member States and civil society organisations – strengthening democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Within its work, the Advisory Council on Youth expects all member States to continue working towards strengthening international partnerships.

We hereby express our continuous support to youth civil society organisations protecting the core values of the Council of Europe in Georgia and beyond, and we will continue being in close contact to monitor the situation.

*The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the Advisory Council on Youth and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Council of Europe or its member states.*