



PARLIAMENT OF GEORGIA  
C H A I R M A N

Tbilisi

Dear Commissioner,

I would like to thank you for your letter regarding the draft law on “transparency of foreign influence” proposed by People’s Power group in the Parliament.

Georgia has achieved progress in democratic transformation with great assistance and cooperation with the Council of Europe, the oldest value-based European organisation. Our aspirations on the EU membership path have been demonstrated by our firm commitment to the fundamental principles of the Convention and democratic values that, among others, created a solid foundation for a diverse and vibrant civil society in Georgia.

We indeed share a common understanding that any regulation that could affect civil society organisations shall be based strictly on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Currently, there are two draft bills proposed in the Parliament – one is an exact copy of the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA), and the other is a non-restrictive, liberal version of the FARA. Let me assure you that parliamentary discussions on the proposed initiatives will be inclusive to find the best possible modality respecting the balance between freedom of Georgia’s dynamic civil society and the legitimate causes of transparency, accountability, and security.

Dear Commissioner,

Citizens comprise the core of the civil society and they have a right to be informed on actors that have impact on their lives. The privilege of having an influence on policy formulation and decision making comes with responsibility. Indeed, state institutions and political parties have the strictest constitutional regulations on openness, transparency and accountability recognized by numerous international organisations and rankings. However, in a sharp comparison, despite the ever-increasing engagement and impact of non-commercial organisations (NPOs) on decision making, there are no workable regulations for NPOs that can provide at least minimum transparency and accountability, including when it comes to foreign funding. More Georgia progresses on the EU membership path, the more important it becomes to realise and respect this shared responsibility in a good spirit.

H.E. Dunja Mijatović  
Commissioner for Human Rights  
Of the Council of Europe

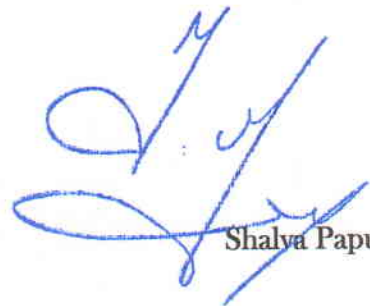
In addition, security-related considerations on money laundering, corruption, terrorism financing and others deriving from the challenging regional security environment could also be a significant rationale behind such regulation.

Importantly, the draft laws will be sent to the Venice Commission in order to ensure that these legitimate interests of transparency, accountability, and security are envisaged in the legislation in a manner that meets international standards.

The Parliament of Georgia stands ready to cooperate with international and local partners on this matter.

Please, accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration and esteem.

Sincerely,



Shalva Papuashvili