

Council of Europe
The Secretary General

Strasbourg, 19 March 2024

Dear Ambassador,

Thank you for your letter referring to worrying and deplorable developments in the framework of the presidential elections of the Russian Federation.

I hereby reiterate my strong and unequivocal condemnation of the illegal organisation of Russian presidential elections in the Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. The establishment of election precincts in both regions, as well as the issuing of Russian passports to local residents, amount to gross violations of fundamental principles of international law, in particular sovereignty, territorial integrity, and non-interference in internal affairs.

Allow me to take this opportunity to reiterate the Council of Europe's unwavering commitment to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Ministers' Deputies have most recently reaffirmed this well-established position in the decision taken at their 1479th meeting on 31 October 2023, explicitly denouncing the regular conduct of illegal so-called "elections" in both Georgian regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia as well as the illegal issuing of Russian passports. Rest assured that this matter will remain high on the Council of Europe's agenda, including in the framework of my biannual consolidated reports on the conflict in Georgia.

Yours sincerely,



Marija Pejčinović Burić

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