



## **FAC Chairs Call to Withdraw “Russian Law” from Georgian Parliament 5 April 2024**

We, the Chairs of our respective parliaments’ Foreign Affairs Committees,

Noting that on April 3 the parliamentary majority leader of the ruling Georgian Dream party announced the reintroduction of the draft law on “Transparency of Foreign Influences”, which in effect is a carbon copy of the last year’s so-called Russian Law on Foreign Agents;

Taking into account that under immense pressure and overwhelming mobilization of the Georgian people, who took to protest in the streets, the ruling party in May 2023 has promised “to unconditionally withdraw” such legislation from the parliamentary deliberations;

Expressing deep concern about the content of this Putin’s Russia’s-style law, which is designed to stigmatize and weaken Georgia’s vibrant pro-European civil society and NGO sector, while it is widely known as Georgia’s greatest asset and hope and has a reputation of being one of the most transparent in the world in terms of budget and funding;

Underlying that reintroduction of this law severely undermines Georgia’s hard-won European perspective and candidate status, because creating and maintaining the enabling environment for civil society organisations and media freedom is at the core of democracy and crucial for the success of Georgia’s European integration;

Seeing this as a hostile move towards Georgian people’s European aspirations and their future, and expressing grave concern about it;

Recalling that Georgia was granted the EU candidate status on the understanding that it will implement the 12 steps outlined by the European Commission, to advance towards the opening of accession negotiations and that up to now Georgia has only implemented 3 of those recommendations;

Also recalling that Step 9 includes a recommendation for Georgia to make sure that civil society can operate freely, and Step 1 calls on Georgia to fight disinformation against the EU and its values;

Urge the ruling Georgian Dream party to withdraw it from parliamentary deliberations, as we continue to support the European aspirations of the Georgian people and expect that Georgia upholds its commitment to the promotion of democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

We sincerely hope that the Georgian government will once again demonstrate its maturity and determination to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions, guided by the values of Western liberal democracy. The future of the Georgian people is at stake.

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