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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-  
President of the European Commission

Brussels, 2 April 2019

Dear High Representative,

As you are aware, Georgia, an EU Associated Country that enjoys a very close and positive relationship with the European Union - shaped in the Associated Agreement and its Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA)-, held presidential elections in late 2018. The report released by the OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission, of which the delegation of the European Parliament was part, produced one of the most critical assessments since 1991. In the report issued following the elections, key and specific concerns were identified such as the large-scale of vote buying, the fear of retribution due to electoral choices as well as pressure and intimidation of public employees. Moreover, ISFED (International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy), a Tbilisi-based election watchdog, referred to the cases intimidation and harassment in the context of the election, in particular the case of political pressure on the school principal of Zugdidi's Public School No 6 Mrs. Ia Kerzaia days before she suffered a stroke, which eventually resulted in her death.

Both reports ring an alarm bells for us, Members of the European Parliament and friends of Georgia, wishing this European country to continue on the way and path of reforms so that it can fulfill its commitments under the Association Agreement with the European Union.

In fact, political stability and ensuring a civilised political contestation, particularly in light of the forthcoming 2020 parliamentary elections, are of great importance. Most credible interlocutors and organisations, namely the Venice Commission, and Georgia's credible watchdogs and non-governmental organizations, such as ISFED, have long identified Georgia's mixed election system prone to produce supermajorities as a major systemic problem. The decision of the current government to delay in enacting the fully proportional election system from 2020 to 2024 received much criticism from all these stakeholders, in particular the civil society. Following the presidential elections, virtually all of Georgia's opposition political parties and credible civil society have called upon the Government to engage in dialogue over achieving a compromise on the election system already for 2020.

It is our belief that such a dialogue on this subject, and an eventual compromise, would inevitably reduce the extreme polarization in Georgia. Therefore, we encourage you to exert pressure on the

cc Ambassador Carl Hartzell, Head of the European Union Delegation in Georgia

Georgian leadership to engage in a meaningful dialogue with the opposition regarding the electoral reform, in particular at your future exchanges with the Georgian government and through the EU Delegation to Georgia.

Best regards,

Ana Gomes (S&D)

Michael Gahler (EPP)

Rebecca Harms (Greens/EFA)

Nathalie Griesbeck (ALDE)

Julie Ward (S&D)

Alyn Smith (Greens/EFA)

Tunne Kelam (EPP)

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