

# **Nordic-Baltic statement on recent developments in Georgia**

We, the Nordic-Baltic countries have supported the democratic and economic development of Georgia ever since its restoration of independence.

By granting Georgia EU candidate status in December of last year, the EU showed that it supports the aspirations of the Georgian people. Georgia was given a clear path to start accession negotiations and later on join the European Union. However, recently the Georgian authorities have chosen a concerning trajectory disrupting Georgia's European future.

The draft law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, currently under consideration in Georgia's parliament, is incompatible with European norms and values. If adopted, the law could be used to silence media and civil society organisations that play a vital role in helping Georgia on its way to EU membership. The claims by Georgian authorities that the proposal resembles EU draft legislation are unfounded and misleading. We urge Georgia's political leaders to reconsider adoption of the draft law.

The decision to pursue EU membership is the sovereign choice of Georgia and its people. It is the responsibility of the Georgian authorities to fulfill the preconditions if it wishes to join the European Union. The anti-Western rhetoric of Georgian authorities seriously risk undermining Georgia's European choice. The EU candidate status was granted to Georgia on the understanding that 9 steps would be fulfilled. At this point, Georgian authorities have not made overall progress in fulfilling those steps.

We have a strong wish to see Georgia succeed on its European and Euro-Atlantic path as desired by a large majority of the Georgian people. We hope the Georgian government will use this historical window of opportunity created by a reinvigorated EU enlargement process and revert to the course towards EU membership.