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From: Jerry Markon
Sent: Tuesday, June 30, 2020 9:57 AM
To: Jerry Markon
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Subject: GEORGIAN PARLIAMENT CONFIRMS HISTORIC CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

Successful Vote in Parliament Heralds a New Era for Georgian Democracy

U.S., E.U., International Community Applauds Georgian Dream Commitment to Electoral Reforms

(Tbilisi – 30 June 2020) Yesterday, Georgia took a decisive and historic step towards the European Union and the West with the adoption of the March 8 electoral reform agreement in a final Parliamentary vote.

The Parliament of Georgia voted to adopt the Constitutional Amendments required to implement the March 8 Agreement, with 117 members out of 150 parliamentarians voting in favour.

The constitutional reforms proposed by the Georgian Dream government, were the result of steadfast support from Georgia's Western Allies, the U.S., E.U., U.K. and other international partners.

Archil Talakvadze, Speaker of the Georgian Parliament issued the following statement –

“Today’s vote fulfils the desire of the Georgian people for greater democracy and political participation by every citizen. It confirms that the Georgian Dream party is the true guardian of Georgia’s democratic future.

“To all of our citizens, let us celebrate that our nation has come together to battle the coronavirus and to battle for stronger democratic reforms. On behalf of all Georgians, I thank our international partners especially the United States and the European Union, for helping Georgia to reach this historic moment.

“Unfortunately, many in the opposition chose to defy the will of the people and put politics ahead of the people by voting against democracy. Nevertheless, we will not let naysayers snuff out a historic accomplishment. This giant leap towards Europe will ensure security, prosperity and new opportunities for millions of people in the current and future generations of Georgians.”

The radical opposition parties did not participate in the vote; they abandoned their duties when the Georgian people needed them most. Our international partners urged all parties to vote for this reform. Instead, the radical opposition tried to sabotage the vote, and hurled insults at Western diplomats who are true friends of Georgia.

The Georgian Dream, under the leadership of Bidzina Ivanishvili, has supported full proportional representation since it came to power in 2012. Georgian Dream worked with our international partners to negotiate the electoral reform, our Members of Parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of the reform, and the Georgian Dream-led government remains fully committed to implementing the reforms ahead of the October 2020 elections.

Georgian Dream will never break our promises, or backtrack on commitments. The government's track record of delivering for the Georgian people remains clear to see.

What Georgia's Western Allies Are Saying

- Joint Statement by the Facilitators: [U.S. Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan](#) and [EU Ambassadors](#):
“We warmly congratulate the Parliament of Georgia on today’s adoption of Constitutional amendments designed to increase parliamentary pluralism and allow for a more representative legislature. We recognize that these amendments reflect difficult compromises by Georgia’s political parties and commend those who ensured their successful passage”

Background

- The historic electoral reform agreement was reached by all political parties on March 8th of this year. The Memorandum of Understanding obliged all the signatories to put the interests of the Georgian citizens and the consolidation of Georgia's democracy first. The agreement was accompanied by a Joint Statement recognizing the broader objective of holding free and fair elections.
- The March 8 Agreement was the outcome of more than three months of intense rounds of negotiations among the broad spectrum of political parties, civil society, and international partners. The entire process was facilitated by the representatives of the United States, European Union, Germany, and the Council of Europe. The participation of Georgia’s allies to reach the agreement and their outspoken support for all parties to ratify the agreement was indispensable.
- The new electoral system is modelled on that used for elections to the European Parliament. The changes ratified by parliament will introduce a new parliamentary composition based on 120 proportional and 30 majoritarian seats, as well as a 1% threshold for parties, and a cap ensuring that no single party that garners less than 40% of votes may claim a majority. The passage of these amendments incorporates key OSCE/ODIHR recommendations.

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