



2021/2236(INI)

31.8.2022

OPINION

of the Committee on International Trade

for the Committee on Foreign Affairs

on the annual implementing report on the EU Association Agreement with
Georgia
(2021/2236(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Markéta Gregorová

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on International Trade calls on the Committee on Foreign Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the positive progress Georgia has made in implementing the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), in particular the approximation to the EU laws aimed at deepening economic integration into the single market; further welcomes the fact that the EU is Georgia's leading trade partner, as around 21 % of Georgia's total trade is with the EU;
2. Takes note of the Commission's opinion and the Council's decision on Georgia's application for EU candidate status, and calls on the Georgian Government to make use of this historic opportunity and swiftly adopt the necessary reforms to fulfil the conditions for candidate status to be granted;
3. Highlights that after the Commission's recommendations of 17 June 2022, at least 60 000 people took to the streets of Tbilisi to demonstrate their commitment to Georgia's European future; notes that according to the National Democratic Institute's survey of January 2022, 83 % of Georgians are in favour of joining the EU;
4. Calls on the Georgian Government to steadily continue to work on aligning national laws with the rule of law standards, particularly those ensuring transparency, an independent judiciary and good governance, and on ensuring the proper implementation of the reforms; in addition, calls on the Commission to closely monitor the development of the rule of law situation in line with its Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) obligations;
5. Encourages the continuation of the fight against corruption and state capture, and urges the Georgian authorities to update the current anti-corruption model to include essential functions to curb corruption and to establish independent anti-corruption services in order to effectively investigate corruption cases; calls further on the Georgian authorities to enforce the legislative norms on preventing corruption, on the principles of integrity and on conflicts of interest in the public service, and to ensure the detection of any violations thereof; stresses that the rule of law, transparency and de-oligarchisation are the basis of European democracy and the European economy, fostering foreign direct investments and further economic integration between Georgia and the EU;
6. Regrets the fact that Georgian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have still not fully utilised the opportunities presented by the DCFTA and that their engagement in global value chains and their exports to the EU remain limited; calls on the Georgian Government to explore ways to boost SMEs' trade with the EU, such as by establishing laboratories in Georgia for EU certification of sanitary and phytosanitary and technical barriers to trade standards;
7. Calls on the Georgian Government to facilitate the exchange of information between Georgian civil society, SMEs and government representatives on the opportunities

presented by the DCFTA and on its implementation; calls further on the Georgian Government to make the facilities necessary for export to the EU accessible;

8. Calls on the Commission to enhance its role in facilitating communication between the Georgian Government, civil society and SMEs, and to distribute core funds to civil society in order to boost capacity building and expertise; welcomes and supports the continuation of Commission programmes, such as the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) Georgia and EU4Business, supporting the development of local civil society and helping SMEs;
9. Regrets the fact that the government decided not to request the second tranche of the COVID-19 MFA and that it failed to adequately address the condition for receiving this tranche, which was to increase the independence, accountability and quality of the judicial system;
10. Welcomes the European assistance programmes supporting digitalisation (for example, EU4Digital and EaP Connect), the environment (for example, EU4Climate and EU4Environment) and young people (EU4Youth and vocational education and training); also highlights the necessity of and the efforts made to establish accessible digital connectivity, in particular in rural areas, and welcomes the investment initiative for fast broadband for rural settlements accordingly;
11. Emphasises that in its REPowerEU Plan, the EU seeks to swiftly reduce its dependence on Russian fossil fuels and to accelerate the green transition; highlights that, in line with the RePowerEU Plan, the EU should further support Georgia in ensuring reliable and sustainable energy; calls on Georgia to enhance its engagement in the fight against climate change and on the Commission to facilitate Georgian participation in the European Green Deal and to ensure that the DCFTA does not contradict climate imperatives, social and environmental objectives and the initiatives set out therein;
12. Welcomes the fact that the Georgian Government has adopted labour reforms and its subsequent amendment of the labour law, reinstating a higher level of protection to labour rights and approving the law on the Labour Inspection Services; urges the government to address further critical issues of law and to tackle inadequate wages and remuneration, unregulated working hours, overtime work, the inadequate compensation for maternity and childcare leave, the absence of possibilities to organise solidarity strikes, and the determination of exhaustive grounds for the termination of an employment contract.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	31.8.2022
Result of final vote	+: 33 -: 2 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	Barry Andrews, Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Paolo Borchia Geert Bourgeois, Saskia Bricmont, Markus Buchheit, Udo Bullmann, Jordi Cañas, Arnaud Danjean, Emmanouil Fragkos, Raphaël Glucksmann, Markéta Gregorová, Roman Haider, Christophe Hansen, Heidi Hautala, Danuta Maria Hübner, Herve Juvin, Karin Karlsbro, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Emmanuel Maurel, Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó, Samira Rafaela, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Massimiliano Salini, Helmut Scholz, Sven Simon, Kathleen Van Brempt, Jörgen Warborn, Pernille Weiss, Iuliu Winkler, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jérémy Decerle, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Enikő Györi, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Manuela Ripa, Pedro Silva Pereira

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

33	+
ECR	Geert Bourgeois, Emmanouil Fragkos
ID	Paolo Borchia
NI	Carles Puigdemont i Casamajó
PPE	Anna-Michelle Asimakopoulou, Arnaud Danjean, José Manuel García-Margallo y Marfil, Christophe Hansen, Danuta Maria Hübner, Massimiliano Salini, Sven Simon, Jörgen Warborn, Pernille Weiss, Iuliu Winkler, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
RENEW	Barry Andrews, Jordi Cañas, Jérémy Decerle, Karin Karlsbro, Samira Rafaela
S&D	Udo Bullmann, Raphaël Glucksmann, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Bernd Lange, Margarida Marques, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Inma Rodríguez-Piñero, Pedro Silva Pereira, Kathleen Van Brempt
VERTS/ALE	Saskia Bricmont, Markéta Gregorová, Heidi Hautala, Manuela Ripa

2	-
ID	Herve Juvin
THE LEFT	Emmanuel Maurel

4	0
ID	Markus Buchheit, Roman Haider
NI	Enikő Győri
THE LEFT	Helmut Scholz

CORRECTIONS TO VOTES	
+	Enikő Győri
-	
0	

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention