



ENEMO condemns draft law on “foreign agents” in Georgia

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The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) expresses its deepest concerns regarding initiating a [draft law](#) on “foreign agents” by Members of Parliament in Georgia.

The draft law plans for any civil or media organization which receives over 20 percent of its income from abroad to be obligated to register on a “Registry of Foreign Influence Agents” or face sanctions.

ENEMO joins other [international](#) and [domestic](#) voices in condemning such draft legislation, which would pave the way for undue pressure on Georgian civil society organizations, media, and human rights activists. This can substantially worsen the state of democracy in the country and the rights of citizens by hindering freedom of speech, stifling independent monitors, and infringing fundamental human and political rights.

ENEMO strongly stands against such provisions and the terminology itself – “foreign influence agents” – which implies the notion of “espionage” and is both stigmatizing and misleading. It essentially labels organizations and individuals as engaging in “political activities” with foreign support with an alleged aim to damage the country’s interests. Additionally, it opens the door to varying interpretations of vague and broad terminology, and constitutes a serious violation of basic human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of association.

Other countries, such as the Russian Federation and several CIS countries, have used similar laws as an instrument to crackdown on independent voices, election observers, media representatives, civil society activists, and human rights defenders. The legislation passed in the Russian Federation, for instance, was [extended](#) to include not only nonprofit organizations, but also media outlets, independent journalists, non-partisan domestic and international election observers, and civil society more broadly. This has opened the door to further stigmatization, pressure on NGOs, criminalization, and even prosecution of activists in the country.

ENEMO calls upon the Parliament of Georgia to not adopt this legislation, which violates fundamental rights and freedoms. Civil and political rights are vital for an effective democracy. Societies should be free from undue pressure or control over the activities and existence of associations and the participation of individuals in civic life.

The European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO) is an international network of independent non-partisan CSOs that supports democratic development and citizen's participation in political processes. It is composed of 22 leading domestic monitoring organizations from 18 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia, including three European Union countries. ENEMO was founded on September 29, 2001 in Croatia. All ENEMO members are committed to the principles of non-partisanship, impartiality, transparency, objectiveness and accuracy. ENEMO and its members respect and promote international standards for free and transparent elections, as well as ways and mechanisms for democratic development, engagement and empowerment of citizens.

ENEMO Member Organizations are: *Albania - Coalition for Reforms, Integration and Consolidated Institutions (KRIIK Albania), Albania - Society for Democratic Culture (SDC), Armenia - Transparency International Anti-corruption Center (TIAC), Azerbaijan - Election Monitoring and Democratic Studies Center (EMDS), Belarus - Belarusian Helsinki Committee, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Centres for Civic Initiatives (CCI), Croatia - GONG, Georgia - International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), Kazakhstan - FSCI, Kosovo - Kosova Democratic Institute (KDI), Kyrgyzstan - Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society (SDCS), North Macedonia - Citizens Association MOST, Moldova - Promo-LEX Association, Montenegro - Center for Democratic Transition (CDT), Montenegro - The Centre for Monitoring and Research – CeMI, Poland - The Political Accountability Foundation (PAF), Serbia - Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID), Serbia - Center for Research, Transparency and Accountability (CRTA), Slovakia - Obcianske OKO, Ukraine - Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), Ukraine - The Civil Network OPORA.*