

Criteria & Standards (C&S) Subcommittee Assessment of Compliance with Steering Committee Resolution

Endorsed by C&S on March 24, 2026

On October 14, 2024, the OGP Steering Committee adopted a resolution proceeding to Stage Two Actions under the Response Policy in relation to the Government of Georgia. The resolution temporarily suspended Georgia from OGP and invited the Government to develop a work plan addressing outstanding recommendations, including:

- The withdrawal of current or proposed legislation that discriminates, stigmatizes, or hinders the freedom of expression and association of civil society organizations, media representatives and vulnerable groups.
- Safeguard freedoms of expression and assembly, the space for civil society and their ability to operate without physical and verbal attacks, including in election periods.

The resolution established March 31, 2025 as the deadline for submission of a work plan, with milestones for implementation by December 31, 2025, and an assessment by the C&S Subcommittee by March 31, 2026.

To date, the OGP Support Unit has not received further formal communication from the Government of Georgia regarding the development or implementation of such a work plan. In the absence of any communications or follow-up by the Government, this assessment relies primarily on the [European Commission's 2025 Georgia Report](#) as an independent third-party evaluation of developments in the country, further corroborated by the detailed accounts of partner civil society organisations based in the country and additional reporting by international human rights organisations.

The analysis below reviews whether available evidence indicates progress toward addressing the two recommendations outlined in the Steering Committee resolution.

1. Assessment of Recommendation 1

The Government of Georgia did not withdraw legislation that discriminates, stigmatizes, or hinders the freedom of expression and association of civil society organisations, media representatives, and vulnerable groups. The Commission characterizes the situation as follows:

“The adoption of repressive legislation, including the Foreign Agents Registration Act, amendments to the Law on grants and Law on broadcasting, represent a serious backsliding.” (Georgia 2025 Report, p. 18) Further stating that “this legislation... infringes upon fundamental freedoms, in particular, the rights to freedom of association and expression, and significantly undermines the work of civil society and media.” (p. 18)

Regarding the cumulative legal framework, the Venice Commission opinion cited in the EU report found that the legislations’ “cumulative effect is coercive, stigmatising, and ultimately inconsistent with democratic pluralism.” (p. 18)

The Foreign Agents Registration Act adopted in April 2025 requires individuals and entities to register as “foreign agents,” submit detailed reports, and label public statements accordingly (p. 24). Amendments to the Law on grants introduced pre-approval requirements for

foreign-funded grants and administrative penalties for non-compliance (p. 24). The Commission concludes: “The cumulative effect of the new legislation threatens the very survival of independent civil society in the country.” (p. 23)

[Reporting by Human Rights Watch](#) similarly finds that the Georgian authorities adopted legislation targeting civil society and independent media that mirrors restrictive “foreign agent” frameworks previously used in other contexts to stigmatize organizations receiving foreign funding. Human Rights Watch notes that these legislative initiatives impose onerous reporting requirements, labeling obligations, and sanctions that risk severely limiting the ability of civil society groups to operate freely and participate in public life.

Human Rights Watch further assesses that these measures have had a chilling effect on civil society and media organizations, contributing to a broader deterioration of civic space in the country.

The legislation addressed in the C&S resolution has not been withdrawn, but instead, additional amendments affecting civil society and media have been adopted during the reporting period.

2. Assessment of Recommendation 2

Safeguarding freedoms of expression and assembly and ensuring that civil society can operate without physical or verbal attacks, including during election periods.

2.a. Freedom of Assembly and Law Enforcement Response

The Commission reports:

“Human rights are being severely curtailed and are undermined by the adoption of new repressive laws and amendments to existing laws that infringe upon fundamental rights.” (p. 7)

Concerning protest activity, it states:

“Law enforcement agencies have made disproportionate and indiscriminate use of crowd control measures.” (p. 7)

And further:

“No perpetrators were held accountable, fostering an environment of impunity.” (p. 19)

The report references “cases of arbitrary detentions, excessive use of pre-trial detention and the disproportionately harsh sentencing of protesters and journalists” (p. 7–8).

These findings indicate ongoing concerns regarding safeguards for peaceful assembly and proportionality of law enforcement response.

Human Rights Watch similarly reports that authorities responded to largely peaceful demonstrations with the use of force and mass detentions, raising serious concerns about the protection of the right to peaceful assembly. According to Human Rights Watch, police interventions during protests included the detention of demonstrators and allegations of

excessive force, further contributing to concerns regarding the shrinking space for public dissent.

2.b. Freedom of Expression and Media Environment

The Commission notes:

“Georgia declined to an early stage of preparation in the area of freedom of expression... For a second consecutive year, there was backsliding.” (p. 8)

It further reports:

“Acts of intimidation, threats and verbal and physical assault against journalists and media workers were widely reported.” (p. 8)

Amendments to the Law on broadcasting are described as negatively affecting “the right to freedom of expression and the ability of the media to operate freely” (p. 8).

Human Rights Watch similarly reports growing pressure on independent journalists and media outlets, including harassment and intimidation in connection with their reporting. The organization notes that the broader legal and political environment has increasingly constrained independent media and limited pluralistic public debate.

2.c. Civic Space During Election Periods

The Steering Committee resolution explicitly referenced the need to safeguard civic space, including during election periods.

The European Commission report describes the October 2024 parliamentary elections as occurring in:

“a highly polarised atmosphere marked by democratic backsliding, with restrictive laws undermining fundamental rights.” (p. 4)

The Commission further reports “intimidation targeting civil society and independent media” during municipal elections (p. 4–5). It concludes that amendments to electoral legislation and broader developments “drastically reduced the possibility of holding competitive elections.” (p. 5). This all amounts to “a deliberate policy of institutionalising control over civic space.” (p. 19)

Human Rights Watch similarly assesses that the overall human rights situation in Georgia deteriorated during the reporting period, with legislative initiatives targeting civil society and increased pressure on protest movements and independent media contributing to a broader erosion of democratic safeguards.

3. Conclusion

The evidence drawn from the European Commission’s 2025 Georgia Report - corroborated by partner accounts - demonstrates:

- Sustained democratic backsliding.

- Enactment and expansion — not withdrawal — of repressive legislation targeting civil society and media.
- Continued concerns regarding freedom of assembly and proportionality of law enforcement response.
- Continued concerns regarding freedom of expression and media independence.
- Electoral processes conducted in environments described as highly polarised and marked by intimidation.
- Significant shrinking of civic space and legislative developments affecting civil society participation.

The European Commission characterizes the trajectory as “serious backsliding” and notes that Georgia’s course of action is “fundamentally incompatible with EU values of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.”

In the absence of a submitted work plan or official reporting from the Government of Georgia to the OGP Support Unit, and based on the independent third-party assessment available, there is no evidence that the two central recommendations issued by the OGP Steering Committee have been adequately addressed.

Given the sustained, documented, and systemic nature of these developments, the conditions necessary for OGP participation — genuine civic space, institutionalized participation, and protection of fundamental freedoms — are no longer present.

On the basis of the totality of evidence, C&S recommends the permanent withdrawal of the Government of Georgia from the Open Government Partnership.