



5 October, 2012

Georgian National Platform

Statement by the Eastern Partnership's Georgian National Platform on the parliamentary election and the role of civil society

The Georgian National Platform states that the holding of the 1 October 2012 parliamentary election in a peaceful and stable atmosphere is an important step forward for Georgia's democratic development, one which lays the ground for accelerating the country's integration with the EU.

It is significant that the preliminary assessments of local international observation organizations found that the election was held democratically and transparently overall despite the tense and problematic pre-election atmosphere and individual cases of violations on Election Day and during the vote tallying process.

We believe that the preliminary positive assessments by monitoring organizations and the international community regarding the election should be reinforced by ensuring that the subsequent processes go ahead within the democratic and Constitutional framework. In this regard, the National Platform:

- Believes that it is essential to maintain a peaceful and stable environment - without incidents and confrontation - in the ensuing period, including until the entire electoral process comes to an end.
- Expresses hope that there will be an appropriate legal response to disputes linked to violations of the law observed during the election.
- Emphasizes the importance of the fact that the result of the 1 October parliamentary election marks the first precedent in the country's 20-year history of independence where the government is replaced through democratic means and the acting authorities acknowledged that they are going into opposition.
- Acknowledges that the 1 October parliamentary election marks the start of an important stage in the country's development.
- Expresses hope that in the new political reality it will be possible to establish a format for relations between the majority and the opposition that is in line with democratic,

civilized and European values. This is a prerequisite for the reinforcement and long-term consolidation of the democratic process in Georgia.

- Deems necessary healthy dialogue between the majority and the opposition that is oriented towards the interests of the state.
- Believes it is necessary for civil society to deepen relations with the parliamentary political spectrum and the government and establish a new, structured format for dialogue with them.

The National Platform - as the largest union of civic society organizations in Georgia – and its thematic working groups express readiness to take part in democratic reforms and efforts to accelerate Euro-integration processes through structured dialogue, thematic recommendations, sharing of expertise and civic monitoring.

We also note that the challenges highlighted on several occasions by the National Platform during the pre-election period remain relevant and require immediate response.

In this respect, the most important task remains the issue of media freedom and accessibility to diverse information, as well as the conduct of an independent investigation into and legal response to grave violations of human rights existing in the penitentiary system and the criminal justice system as a whole. The Platform once again emphasizes that it is important for the incoming convocation of parliament to set up an independent investigatory commission that will work together with civil society.

We believe that, in parallel, the fundamental reform of the judicial system, as well as the strengthening of mechanisms for ensuring human and property rights – based on, inter alia, Western experience and expertise – should also be of top priority.

The National Platform is ready to immediately present concrete ideas and proposals regarding these and other issues of importance to the post-election period to the political forces in parliament for discussion.