

(English version)

Priority question for written answer P-002424/25
to the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Krzysztof Brejza (PPE)
(16 June 2025)

Subject: EU Response to democratic backsliding and Russification in Georgia: sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili and other responsible actors

In recent years, Georgia has experienced a serious decline in democratic standards. Political leaders and civil society activists are being subjected to politically motivated prosecution, with trials lacking judicial independence. Citizens face intimidation and blackmail by state authorities. Free and independent media are being silenced, journalists harassed and dissent suppressed.

While Russia is not using direct military force, it exerts control through hybrid tactics — disinformation, support for authoritarian governance and institutional capture. This reflects the Kremlin's broader regional strategy.

At the heart of this process is oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, who, despite holding no official role, exerts de facto control over the Georgian government. His influence is instrumental in undermining Georgia's Euro-Atlantic path and aligning it with Russian interests. He is supported by a network of political actors complicit in democratic erosion and authoritarian consolidation.

In the light of this backsliding:

1. What concrete steps is the Commission taking to impose targeted sanctions on Ivanishvili and others responsible for obstructing Georgia's European future?
2. How will the Commission respond to media repression, the erosion of judicial independence and the persecution of the opposition?
3. When does the Commission intend to act, and with what tools, to address those undermining democracy in Georgia?

Submitted: 16.6.2025

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas on behalf of the European Commission
(9 July 2025)

In reaction to Georgia's democratic backsliding, the EU has adopted a number of measures. Political contacts with the authorities have been downgraded and assistance to the authorities has been suspended.

The EU has stepped up its support to civil society and independent media and additional resources have been made available to counter disinformation ⁽¹⁾. Georgia's accession process has been effectively halted. The visa-free regime for the Georgian holders of diplomatic and service passports has been suspended ⁽²⁾.

At the Foreign Affairs Council of 16 December 2024 ⁽³⁾, the High Representative/Vice-President (HR/VP) proposed to impose sanctions on those Georgian citizens responsible for, involved in, or associated with serious human rights violations under the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime. While unanimity on sanctions has not been reached yet by Member States in the Council, discussions with Member States continue.

As announced by the HR/VP at the Foreign Affairs Council of 23 June 2025 ⁽⁴⁾, the situation in Georgia and further concrete EU measures will be discussed at an upcoming Foreign Affairs Council.

⁽¹⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-press-conference_en;
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2024/12/16/>.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2025/01/27/georgia-council-suspends-visa-free-travel-for-diplomats-and-officials/>.

⁽³⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-press-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-press-conference_en.

⁽⁴⁾ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-remarks-high-representative-kaja-kallas-press-conference-0_en.