



**GEORGIAN  
NATIONAL PLATFORM**

EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Delegation of the European Union to Georgia

Address by Mrs. Nino Chkhobadze, Chairperson of the  
Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum  
Georgian National Platform

Your Excellency,

The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum Georgian National Platform (EaP CSF GNP) reaffirms its respect to you and always notes the important role of the European Union in supporting Georgia.

As you may be aware, the Government of Georgia has recently initiated major amendments to the legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – the Environmental Assessment Code.

The EaP CSF GNP Working Group 3 (transport, energy, and climate change) is concerned about these legislative amendments as initiated by the Government.

It should be noted, that the aforementioned successful law has been adopted as part of the key commitments under the Georgia-EU Association Agreement. We believe that the European Union, as a party to this agreement, should have been informed and consulted on any significant changes proposed to this commitment.

It would have been advisable to consult on such legislative amendments with other European stakeholders as well, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, which provided Georgia with assistance and expertise in drafting this legislation and bringing it in complete conformity with EU EIA and SEA Directives, as well as in their capacity of the Secretariat to the Aarhus Convention.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Issues.

We consider that the proposed amendments considerably worsen this legislation and reduce the political weight of the strategic environmental assessment and the environmental impact assessment as key environmental governance instruments. We believe that these proposed changes would also reduce the ability of Georgian citizens to influence the environmental decision-making process.

In addition, the proposed amendments, according to which the SEA/EIA decisions would be delegated not to the State Authority, but to non-State actor, the Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) the National Environment Agency, would also create acute conflicts of interests due to the fact that this entity would acquire the right not only to review and to monitor the EIA/SEA documents, but now also to take environmental decisions as consents of the State. The above-mentioned concerns are further exacerbated by the policies of the Government of Georgia that require the National Environment Agency to generate commercial revenues from selling the data on environment rather than to disseminate data on state of the environment openly and freely, which is undoubtedly an additional important factor enhancing concerns over the anticipated conflicts of interests.

Moreover, one more attempt to downgrade the environmental protection sector is also concerning in general. Since after the Georgian State merged the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection into single agency, environmental governance has been significantly weakened. With the proposed amendments to the legislation, yet another important tool of environmental governance and policy implementation is revoked, which is deeply concerning trend and should not be ignored.

The Georgian National Platform hopes that you are aware of these amendments and would be in a position to communicate your kind opinion on this important matter within the framework and context of EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

Sincerely Yours,

Nino Chkhobadze

March 7, 2022

