



# GRASS Disinfo Brief

**MONITORING PERIOD:**

**October -24-30**

GRASS  
REFORMANDA





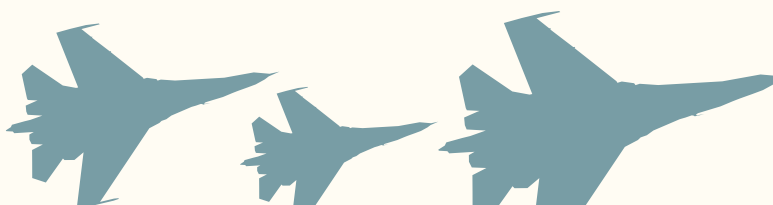
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**As the date for the European Commission's decision on Georgia's candidate status nears, Georgian CSO's appeal to the President of the European Commission**

With the EU Commission's enlargement report on Georgia's progress approaching, [Georgian CSO's appealed to](#) the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen. The official letter highlights that the complex geopolitical situation that presents Georgia with pressing security issues, granting candidate status to Georgia would be crucial in enhancing Georgia's security and allowing Georgia to devote more efforts to democratic reforms. The Georgian civil society express hope that the EU Commission will recommend granting EU membership candidate status to Georgia, as it would mark another milestone toward fulfilling Georgia's historic choice, serve as a catalyst for continuous democratic reforms that strengthen institutions, and bolster Georgia's, as well as Europe's, security.

### **Last-Minute Witch Hunt: A Week Before Georgia's Candidate Status Decision**

Georgian Dream and People's Power movement have been trying to capitalise on a statement made by Khatuna Samnidze, Chairperson of the Republican Party and opposition MP, to discredit the whole opposition by saying that they are collectively working against Georgian interests. Samnidze appeared on "PalitraTV" and [called on](#) some of the opposition colleagues to stop spreading messages that damage the chances of Georgia receiving candidate status. According to her, during meetings the European partners tell her that the messages of the opposition are ambiguous and incoherent. "Our European partners say that our [the opposition's] messages are not clear and unified. This is a problem. Georgian Dream has a damaging role in the whole process, but part of the opposition also thinks that the decision [on Georgia's candidate status] should be made after the elections. Those who have this position should come out and say it publicly. This is not a good solution. Bidzina Ivanishvili will become



stronger with his anti-Western messages if Georgia is denied candidate status”, stated Samnidze.

Some opposition members underlined that their respective party members have [never shared](#) similar messages with European partners, others [confirmed](#) that different messages from the opposition do concern European partners. Furthermore, some claimed that the opposition [does not possess](#) the power to challenge the European Commission’s decision, while other individual opposition members [accused](#) Samnidze of serving Georgian Dream’s interests.

- Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili [reiterated](#) that the government had previously cautioned the public about the opposition's harmful and undermining activities, as it was clear that opposition members were pushing to block Georgia's candidate status. The Prime Minister called the opposition treacherous, underlining that they do not want the country to succeed while the Georgian Dream is in power. Gharibashvili found it positive that the opposition had admitted to their wrongdoings, and he assured everyone that despite internal and external enemies, Georgia would still attain candidate status.
- Chairperson of the Georgian Dream, Irakli Kobakhidze, [stated](#) that the opposition had a day of confession. Samnidze confirmed what the ruling party has long asserted - that the opposition is lobbying against Georgia’s candidate status. According to Kobakhidze, the stakeholders that Samnidze had in mind are the United National Movement, Lelo and Nika Gvaramia, Director of Mtavari TV Channel. “We know for sure that these stakeholders were travelling to Europe and lobbying against Georgia’s candidate status”, stated Kobakhidze. According to the Chairperson, the radical opposition will continue to lobby against Georgian interests. However, the ruling party remains optimistic that the European Commission will make a favourable decision in November, avoiding last year’s mistake.
- Chairperson of the Parliament Shalva Papuashvili [asserted](#) that it is because of Khatuna Samnidze and her allies that Georgia did not receive candidate status last year as they were actively lobbying against it. According to Papuashvili, the opposition can be divided into two groups: one that continues to work against Georgia's candidate status and another that realizes the failure of this strategy and is trying to abandon ship. Samnidze herself was comfortably on board the ship was sailing firmly against the interests of Georgia, but they now saw this ship sinking.
- Secretary General of Georgian Dream and Mayor of Tbilisi, Kakha Kaladze, was not surprised by Samnidze’s statement, [emphasising](#) that although it is a sad reality, the opposition has been involved in similar actions for years, lobbying against EU-Georgia Association Agreement, visa-liberalisation, and now against Georgia’s candidate status. According to Kaladze, based on the information received from foreign partners, the United National Movement, Giorgi Vashadze, Lelo and Nika Gvaramia are lobbying against Georgia’s candidate status.
- First Deputy Chairperson of the Parliament, Giorgi Volski, [argued](#) that the contents of Samnidze’s statement were not scandalous, but the fact that a staunch fighter against the Georgian Dream confessed to what was already known. The ruling party already knew

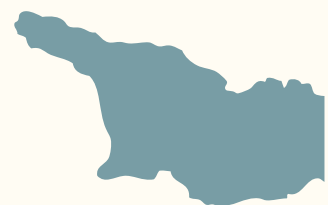
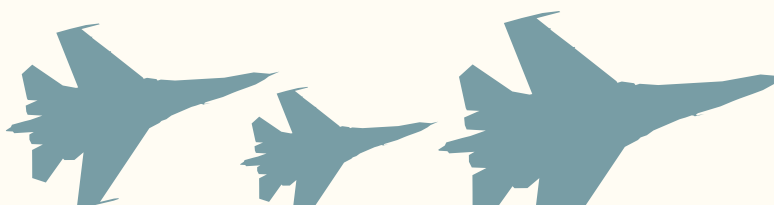


that certain opposition members were spreading disinformation about Georgia in Brussels and other European capitals as if Georgia was helping Russia avoid international sanctions. According to Volski, Samnidze's statement verifies that the opposition is one big revolutionary committee which is attempting to undermine Georgia's candidate status so that they can start a revolution in the country.

- People's Power movement released a [statement](#) which argues that Samnidze's confession also confirms that the EU artificially created the political crisis in 2021 and 2022. The EU assessed the opposition's parliamentary boycott as a political crisis and forced the ruling party to sign the unfair April 19th agreement, movement says. After the plan in 2021 failed, the EU tried to stir up the situation in 2022 after refusing Georgia candidate status while Ukraine and CIS member Moldova received it, artificially exacerbating polarisation and radicalisation in Georgia, but this plan has also failed. The statement ends with a rhetorical question – why is the EU creating an artificial crisis in order to bring incompetent, immoral and unpatriotic politicians into power? “We are sure that this is not done with good intentions towards the Georgian people”, reads the statement.

### **Georgian Dream continues to criticise USAID and EED for encouraging extremism, interfering in elections**

- "Parliament Chairperson Shalva Papuashvili continued his critique of USAID, [expressing](#) frustration over the lack of explanation regarding the PVT results conducted by the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED) during the 2020 Parliamentary elections. These results initially indicated a discrepancy between the parallel vote count and official results, but ISFED later clarified that the discrepancy was due to a technical error. Papuashvili has been consistently critical of both ISFED and USAID, even suggesting that USAID interfered in Georgian elections. He also raised concerns about USAID-funded training, accusing it of supporting activists with radical agendas. Additionally, Papuashvili criticized the European Endowment for Democracy (EED) for financing the political party "Droa" and the "Shame Movement," both of which were involved in the March 7-8th “radical protests”. EED funds were also used to pay bail for “extremist activists” arrested during the protests. Papuashvili expressed disappointment, stating, “it is disheartening that, while the EU calls for depolarisation in Georgia, its organizations are spending money in ways that encourage extremism”.
- When someone makes the topic of revolution relevant, and even more with foreign funds, it is naturally disturbing. I call on everyone to leave this country alone”, Irakli Kobakhidze told reporters when he [answered](#) the question about “Indigo” and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung planning to hold a discussion on the topic - “Protest and Resistance in



Georgia”. According to Kobakhidze, society wants peace, and if certain groups want to cause chaos and open a second front, they will be met with an appropriate response. Kobakhidze also commented on the fact that certain NGOs created funds to pay the bail and fines of civil activists, stating that it shows direct support of revolutionary processes by specific donor organisations.

- When asked about a statement made by US intelligence services about Russia’s interference in democratic elections, Irakli Kobakhidze [called on](#) “all the countries” not to interfere in the Georgian elections. Although journalists asked Kobakhidze about Russian interference, he recalled the “fake” PVT results from the 2020 Parliamentary elections, funded by USAID.

### **Georgian Dream continues to bash President Zourabichvili as she holds meeting with opposition MP’s**

On October 24th, President Salome Zourabichvili conducted a meeting with women opposition Members of Parliament, including Ani Tsitlidze (United National Movement), Khatia Dekanoidze (Euro-optimists), Khatuna Samnidze (Republican party), Ana Natsvlishvili, and Salome Samadashvili (Lelo). [As per the MPs](#), the primary subjects of the discussion were Georgia's EU membership candidate status and the process of the President’s impeachment launched by the ruling party. The MPs also [underscored](#) that President Zourabichvili is not intimidated by the ruling party’s threats and actions and is committed to safeguarding the nation's European prospects through her political decisions.

- Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili [contended](#) that the President's collaboration with the opposition stems from the fact that her term is drawing to a close, and she wishes to remain active in politics. He pointed out that the opposition, too, holds positive expectations regarding Georgia's candidate status and is attempting to diminish the achievements of the ruling party by asserting that "only the people deserve candidate status." According to the Prime Minister, the ruling party has successfully secured the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, visa liberalisation, and a European perspective. Therefore, when Georgia attains EU candidate status, it will be attributed to the accomplishments of the Georgian Dream government.
- [As per](#) the Chairperson of Georgian Dream, Irakli Kobakhidze, the meeting was convened due to intentions to form a new political party that would include President Zourabichvili, former Ombudsman Nino Lomjaria, and former Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia. Kobakhidze referred to the female opposition MP’s that met with the President as "the collective UNM" and expressed the view that emerging political parties and political alliances hold no prospects.
- [According](#) to the Chairperson of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili, the recent actions of the President indicate that she, in collaboration with former Ombudsman Nino Lomjaria, has been serving the radical opposition's interests. Regarding Georgia's candidacy status, Papuashvili emphasized that, according to the Georgian Constitution, in matters of foreign affairs, the government represents the Georgian people, not the

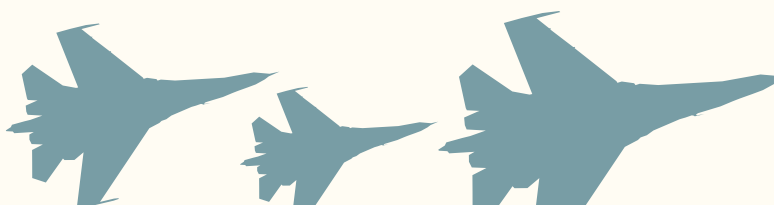


President. Therefore, the government, rather than the President, will secure the EU membership candidate status. Papuashvili stressed that those who suggest otherwise are displaying a lack of respect for the Georgian Constitution.

### **As the “anti-Maidan” movement conducts public meetings in regional towns, propaganda says the West and the opposition are planning a coup**

After the State Security Service of Georgia announced in September that a certain group in Georgia is planning to incite a Maidan-like revolution, it effectively endorsed a narrative previously propagated by pro-Russian actors. In response to this, Alt Info, the Conservative Movement unveiled the “anti-Maidan” movement with the purpose of countering any potential attempts of “a Western-sponsored Maidan-like revolution in Georgia.” The movement has been actively encouraging individuals to enlist, mobilise, and contribute funds, preparing themselves to be on standby should pro-Western protests, reminiscent of the March 7-8th demonstrations, arise. To facilitate their cause, the group has established a 24-hour hotline for volunteer enlistment and has been conducting public meetings throughout various regions. Notably, after the request of several NGOs, the police launched an [investigation](#) into the movement’s activities, questioning one of the leaders of the “anti-Maidan” movement. However, the movement is commencing with its activities without hindrance. As the date for the European Commission’s conclusion on Georgia’s candidate status draws near, propagandists have intensified their efforts to depict the EU, the US and pro-Western groups as enemies of the Georgian people.

- Propagandists have naturally targeted the EU more frequently because the narrative suggests that a Maidan-like revolution will occur if the EU denies Georgia candidate status. One specific propagandist on Alt Infos broadcast [argued](#) that despite the West being occupied by the situation in Ukraine and Israel, the people should still stay vigilant because the Georgian Maidan scenario is still in motion. The propagandist goes on to claim that the EU will deliberately not grant Georgia candidate status to stir up the situation in Georgia, after which the mobilised pro-Western activists, armed with Molotov cocktails, also supported by the US ambassador to Georgia, will occupy main streets. Recalling the protests aimed against the proposed Law on Foreign Agents, the propagandist stated that activists were given Molotov cocktails and ordered to storm the Parliament, portraying the demonstrations as Western-organised.
- Another propagandist on Alt Info’s broadcast [talked](#) about why the EU did not grant Georgia candidate status along with Ukraine and Moldova last year. In his perspective, the pro-Western groups within Georgia were deemed insufficiently influential by the West. This led to the EU denying Georgia candidate status to allow them time to bolster





their position and prepare for protests. The EU will base its decision on whether or not it will increase its influence in the country, not based on Georgia's fulfilment of priorities or the state of democracy.

- Konstantine Morgoshia, one of the leaders of Alt Info and the “anti-Maidan” movement, [stated](#) that the opposition is armed and has brought activists from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia. He contends that the US embassy is devising plans which allegedly involve deliberately causing civilian casualties in order to inflame the protests. Morgoshia is one of the people leading the public meetings conducted by the “anti-Maidan” movement in regional towns, and according to him, people are rightly worried about a potential Maidan scenario in Georgia and support the idea of having friendly relations with Russia.
- Shota Martinenko, another leader of Alt Info and the “anti-Maidan” movement, [asserted](#) that the creation of the movement was necessary because Alt Info and the Conservative Movement could not challenge the collective West alone and needed to reach the general public to neutralise future threats.
- A propaganda source [emphasised](#) that the “radical opposition” plans to overthrow the government, come to power and open a second front. According to the propaganda, the citizens must not remain passive but proactively prepare to thwart any potentially destructive acts that could harm Georgia.
- A guest on Alt Info's broadcast [commented](#) on the USAID-funded training, which, according to the State Security Service of Georgia, taught young activists how to incite a revolution. The guest assessed that the USAID-funded training was a rehearsal for future radical and violent actions which aim to disrupt the country.
- On October 26th, USAID announced the launch of a new project in Georgia, which will fund the Georgian education system with \$14 million. Propagandists on social media assessed this as an attempt by the US to [brainwash](#) the Georgian people and [hide](#) the fact that it was funding training aimed at inciting a revolution in Georgia. “Financers of Canvas and supporters of Maidan in Georgia can never be a friendly organisation to our country!” [reads](#) a post shared by a prominent pro-governmental social media account.
- Another propagandist on Alt Info [brought up](#) the announcement made by the State Security Service of Georgia, which, according to pro-Russian propaganda, confirms that certain groups are planning to incite a revolution. Since, for some reason, the police are not arresting those culpable of planning a revolution, propaganda argues that the people should protect Georgia themselves.

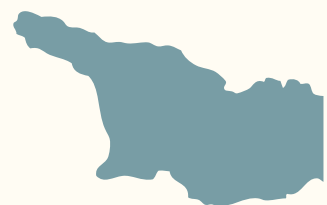
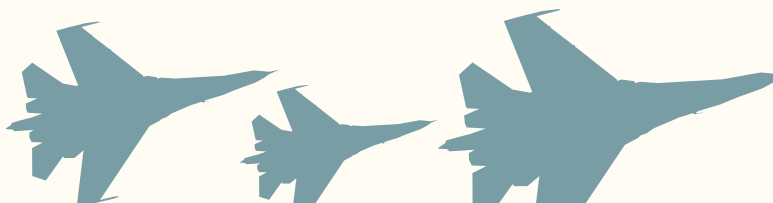
### **Pro-Russian propaganda reiterates that “3+3” platform and close relations with Russia key to security and territorial integrity**

On October 23rd, the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Turkey, Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan held a meeting in Tehran in the framework of the “3+3” format. Although the format presupposes the involvement of Georgia as well, The Georgian Foreign Ministry [announced](#) that Georgia



would not participate in the format, just like in the past. The [joint communique](#) released by the “3+3” platform reaffirmed the openness for equal participation of Georgia and “stressed the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders, non-interference in internal affairs, prohibition of the threat or use of force and respect for human rights based on all principles of the UN Charter”.

- Despite Russia continuing to occupy Georgian sovereign territories, “creeping occupation”, and kidnapping Georgian citizens, the fact that the joint communique highlights “respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity and internationally recognised borders” is enough for pro-Russian propagandists to [argue](#) that if Georgia joins the “3+3” platform, Russia will de jure recognise Georgia’s territorial integrity and the regional powers will guarantee Georgia’s security to protect important regional infrastructure projects. According to propaganda, the only reason Georgia is not joining the platform is due to fear of Western pressure.
- Pro-Russian Sezoni TV anchor Nikoloz Mzhavanadze also [claimed](#) that the West prohibits Georgia from participating in the format. He also argued that the only way for Georgia to restore its territorial integrity is through close relations with Russia because, contrary to the idea that Russia will weaken, allowing Georgia to regain control of occupied territories, Russia is getting stronger. Moreover, any country that opposes Russia, starts to lose territories, like Ukraine and Armenia, while countries like Azerbaijan, which collaborate with Russia, gain territories. Russia is the only saviour of Georgia regarding security, territorial integrity and economic prosperity.
- A pro-Russian social media account shared a post [asserting](#) that if Georgia refuses to participate in formats that involve Russia because of occupation, then it should not have relations with Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, which not only occupied but annexed historic Georgian lands. If Turkey is a strategic partner despite it “occupying” historic Georgian lands and “Turkifying” the Georgian region of Adjara, then Russia should be excused for its current aggression.
- Pro-governmental expert Tamar Kiknadze [argued](#) that the West cannot protect Georgia, which is evident from the fact that it cannot protect Ukraine. Therefore, Georgia should participate in regional platforms, allowing it to make independent decisions from the West.
- One of the anchors on Alt Info [emphasised](#) that the reason why Georgia is not participating in the “3+3” format is because the Georgian Dream government “is continuing the destructive pro-Western course which resulted in social-economic hardship, loss of territories and declining demography”.
- Another pro-Russian propagandist [underlined](#) that Georgia refuses to participate in the format because of slavish obedience to the West.





- A different propagandist on Alt Info [reiterated](#) that the US has leverage over the Georgian Dream and that the fact that the government decided not to participate in the “3+3” format is a betrayal of the country’s interests. Georgia has become a representative of US interests in the region rather than an independent state.
- Another anchor on Alt Info, while [recalling](#) the modern history of Georgia, completely excused Russian aggressive actions against Georgia, blaming the wars in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region on Georgian governments and anti-Russian attitudes. According to him, if Georgia’s anti-Russian stance does not change, it will completely lose the chance of regaining control of Russian-occupied territories.
- A guest on Alt Info’s broadcast [underscored](#) that without close relations with Russia, Georgia will not be able to progress. Although many people in Georgia support restoring relations with Moscow, the US is forcing Georgia to remain in an adversarial relationship with Russia, not even allowing it to participate in regional platforms.

### **Propaganda besmirches Ukrainian President, says the West abandoned Ukraine**

- Sezoni TV anchor Nikoloz Mzhavanadze traditionally [disparaged](#) Ukraine and its President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Commenting on the fact that Israel did not accept Zelenskyy’s visit to Israel after the Hamas attacks, Mzhavanadze underlined the Ukrainian President’s Jewish roots, stating that “even his own people do not want him anymore”. According to the propagandist, Zelenskyy will end up worse than Saakashvili. The Georgian people saved their country by getting rid of Saakashvili, not allowing him to damage the country further, while Zelenskyy has much more blood on his hands, and Ukraine is practically destroyed because of him.
- A frequent guest on Mzhavanadze’s broadcasts, Dito Chubinidze [claimed](#) that the West has abandoned Ukraine while Russia continues to destroy it. Despite providing vital aid to Ukraine, the propagandist emphasised that the Western countries will not send their own troops to assist Kyiv because they do not care enough.
- Anchor on Alt Info’s broadcast, Jaba Zhvania [argued](#) that Ukraine was one of the prospering countries in the Post Soviet space with abundant resources and industries before Europe forced it to start a war with Russia. According to the propagandist, despite Ukraine’s close geographic proximity to the EU, it was still used by the West as cannon fodder and has no chance of developing statehood in the future as a result.
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy recently made a statement about Russian plans to deploy a naval base in Georgia’s Russian-occupied region of Abkhazia, noting that “Ukraine will reach them anywhere”. Editor of the pro-Russian website “Saqinform” [criticised](#) Zelenskyy for suggesting that Ukraine might potentially attack the Russian naval base in Georgia’s occupied region, arguing that Zelenskyy is attempting to drag Georgia into a war against Russia.
- Founder of government-supported NGO “Former Political Prisoners for Human Rights”, Nana Kakabadze, [criticised](#) another statement by Zelenskyy. Referring to potential EU enlargement, Zelenskyy stated that “positive decisions for Ukraine will be positive for everyone. Obviously, this is very important for Moldova, in the long term for Georgia,



and over time, I have no doubt, for Belarus”. Kakabadze criticised Zelenskyy for mentioning Georgia and Belarus in the same context, stating that he has negative attitudes because his plan to illegally send Saakashvili to Georgia, overthrow the government and open a second front failed.

- A social media account [posted](#) a map of Ukraine from 1914, asserting that Ukraine as a state did not exist before 1918. It was created by Lenin and Stalin, reinforcing the narrative that Ukraine is an artificial state and its territories rightfully belong to Russia.

