



MIKHEIL SAAKASHVILI

3RD PRESIDENT OF GEORGIA

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

In just a couple of weeks, either a major victory for Europe, democracy, and peace will occur on the eastern edge of Europe—Georgia—or a major tragedy will unfold. This outcome would not only isolate Europe from our part of the Black Sea for a long time, but it would also destroy the centuries-old aspiration of the Georgian nation to belong in its European home. It would end 33 years of democratic progress by undermining democracy, erasing Georgian independence and statehood, and ultimately jeopardizing the lives of many people, including myself.

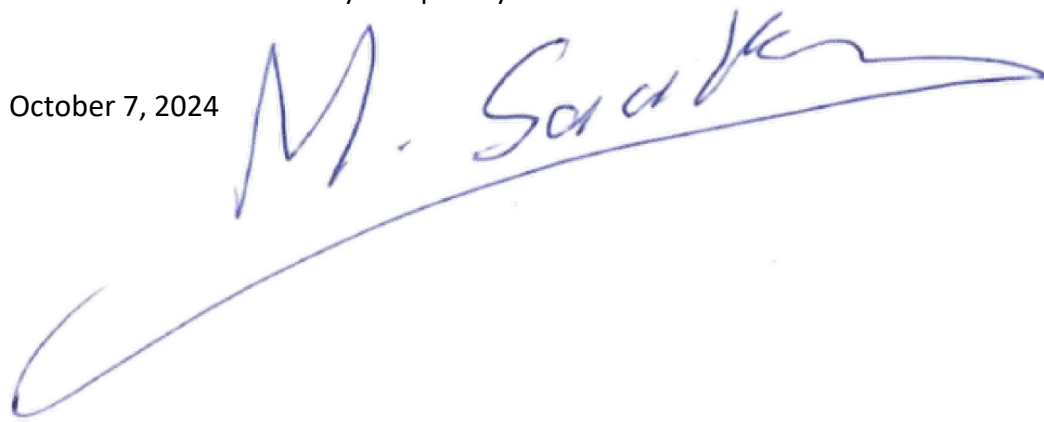
In this struggle, the prevailing mood of the Georgian public is crystal clear—an absolute majority of the population supports Europe and freedom, and they do not want to return to Russian influence. On the opposing side is the Russian oligarch to whom I peacefully handed over power as a result of elections marred by mass Russian meddling. He is unwilling to give up power under any circumstances and is preparing to seize the upcoming elections, just as he seized control of the entire state. Even if he were to consider allowing the Georgian people their say, his masters in Moscow have made it unmistakably clear that they will not permit it, as they want Georgia back as a crown jewel of their resurgent empire, viewing the will of Georgians as merely an irritant. Ivanishvili has been emboldened by the examples of Belarus and Moldova, where autocrats have manipulated elections and severely suppressed opposition through brutal force.

Georgian democracy is in mortal danger. In just over two weeks, we will confront a regime that has lost the elections yet refuses to recognize the results, likely cracking down on hundreds of thousands of protesters, arresting thousands, and potentially using lethal force. This is a classic déjà vu from Belarus and Venezuela. While the world might look away due to wars, U.S. elections, and other significant events, one more democracy may be slaughtered unless you do not abandon us.

The Georgian Dream party is not pursuing an election campaign; they make no promises on how to improve the livelihoods of the people. The only thing they promise is to ban my party, which has sustained democratic processes as the main opposition party for the last 12 years, and to try me again for not fleeing but instead standing my ground and resisting the Russian invasion in 2008. Their campaign is based on fear and the threat of war.

Please do not allow a country that once captured the world's imagination with the Rose Revolution—proclaimed by the World Bank as the world's number one reformer for many years and a regional role model leading the way toward European integration—to become tragically separated from its true dream of being in Europe. Come and observe the elections; voice your support for the Georgian people. Make your voice heard louder than ever and do not allow Russia to seize our country completely.

October 7, 2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Saakashvili", with a long, sweeping underline that extends across the page.