

FAQ: GEORGIA'S EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

- **THE EU HAS RECOGNISED THE 'EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE' OF GEORGIA: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?**
- **WHY WERE UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA GRANTED CANDIDATE STATUS, BUT GEORGIA WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS CONDITIONS FIRST?**
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THE EU HAS RECOGNISED THE 'EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE' OF GEORGIA: WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

Recognising the European perspective for Georgia is extremely important, opening the path towards the EU, and recognising that Georgia has the perspective to join the European Union one day.

In its Opinion on Georgia's application, the European Commission said that Georgia is a European State committed to respecting and promoting the values on which the European Union is founded and therefore recommended that Georgia should be given the perspective to become a member of the European Union.

The Commission recommended that Georgia be granted candidate status once a number of priorities have been addressed, mainly in the areas of democracy, rule of law and human rights. This has been endorsed by the European Council.

WHY WERE UKRAINE AND MOLDOVA GRANTED CANDIDATE STATUS, BUT GEORGIA WILL HAVE TO ADDRESS CONDITIONS FIRST?

The recognition of the European Perspective for all three countries, including Georgia, is a historic step.

It is clear that the opinions differ. Each of the three opinions were based on a thorough and factual assessment by the European Commission. This exercise is based on the own merits of each applicant country. In the case of Georgia, more work needs to be done. This means that fresh energy and consolidation are required to upgrade some of the old ways of doing business.

Georgia's candidate status is within reach, but will only be achieved if the Georgian government works together with the opposition, across party lines, to address the 12 key priorities.

IF GEORGIA RECEIVES CANDIDATE STATUS, WHAT WILL THE COUNTRY HAVE TO DO THEN?

The priorities indicated in the opinions are necessary steps towards the candidate status. The timeline for these steps is in the hands of the Georgian government. Once those priorities will have been considered as addressed by the Commission, it will be for the European Council to decide on granting candidate status to Georgia.

DOES “CANDIDATE STATUS” MEAN A COUNTRY HAS ACCESS TO SPECIAL PROGRAMMES FOR EXAMPLE? ARE THERE OTHER BENEFITS?

Once a country's European perspective has been recognised, obtaining candidate status is the first official step in the accession process.

'Candidate status' does not entail additional rights, benefits or access to additional funding compared to other countries who have been given the European perspective.

IS THERE A TIMELINE FOR GEORGIA TO JOIN THE EU?

Becoming a member of the European Union is not something that happens overnight, it is subject to a thorough process involving substantial work across all membership criteria.

The pace of accession depends on the progress in reforms, first and foremost in the fundamental areas, starting with the rule of law.

Right now, Georgia is encouraged to address the twelve priorities outlined by the European Commission in order to receive candidate status. The Commission will monitor progress to address these priorities. The Commission is invited to report to the Council on the fulfilment of these steps and priorities specified in the opinions on the respective membership applications as part of its regular enlargement package in 2023.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE TWELVE CONDITIONS ARE NOT ADDRESSED IN THE COURSE OF THE NEXT SIX MONTHS? WILL THIS ENDANGER GEORGIA'S EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE?

The recommendations for Georgia outline areas where progress is still needed before candidate status can be granted. This is a clear roadmap that needs to be fully addressed by the Government before Georgia can move forward on its European path. There is no formal deadline to address those conditions. Some priorities require to put in place important reforms for which quality should be privileged over speed.

The European path remains a merit-based process. There are no short cuts to membership, only clear and tangible progress in reforms can drive the process forward. It is now up to Georgia to work and progress along the priorities outlined by the European Commission.

Progress on these reforms will be incentivised and rewarded. Similarly, if an applicant country does not deliver on reforms or regresses, the pre-accession process can be paused or even rolled back.

WHAT DOES “DEOLIGARCHISATION” MEAN IN PRACTICAL TERMS?

Georgia has inherited a legacy of vested interests influencing institutions responsible for the rule of law. If not dealt with, this issue can hamper competition, the investment climate and productivity growth – negatively affecting the welfare of a country in general.

More needs to be done to address the influence of these vested interests in both the political and commercial spheres. It is one of the key priorities that Georgia needs to address on its European path.

It is, however, not the responsibility of the European Commission to single out individuals and structures that pose problems. This is the responsibility of the competent authorities in the country.

TO WHAT EXTENT WAS THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DECISION CONNECTED TO RUSSIA'S MILITARY AGGRESSION IN UKRAINE?

The Commission's opinion was based on an assessment of the three countries, based on their own merits and is not linked to on-going military operations.

Each of the three opinions were based on a thorough and factual assessment by the European Commission, notably taking into account the replies prepared by the Georgian government to the questionnaire the Commission sent. This has led to a differentiation in the Commission's opinion.