

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	441
Land:	Georgien
Kilde:	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
Titel:	First Georgian NGOs Added To 'Foreign Agents' Registry Under Controversial Law
Udgivet:	1. oktober 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. januar 2025



Document #2116300

RFE/RL – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (Author)

First Georgian NGOs Added To 'Foreign Agents' Registry Under Controversial Law

- By [RFE/RL's Echo of the Caucasus](#)

Nine Georgian NGOs have been [added](#) to the country's register of "foreign agents," marking the first time since a controversial law on foreign influence came into effect two months ago that additions have been made to the list.

Five NGOs initially were added on October 1: Youth Organization of Ukrainians in Georgia -- Svitanok, Professional Union of Farmers and Agricultural Workers of Georgia, Kutaisi Youth House, Union of Christians, and the Jewish Cultural and Educational Foundation.

Shortly afterward, four other organizations were added: Girls -- World Leaders, Tbilisi Youth House, Inclusive Practices, and the Association of Initiatives, Development and Employment.

The names of these organizations, along with their financial disclosures, have been published on the official website of Georgia's public registry of foreign agents.

According to the law, media outlets and NGOs that received more than 20 percent of their funding from foreign sources in 2023 are required to register as entities working "in the interest of a foreign force." The majority of Georgian media and nonprofits received that level of funding from outside the country last year.

The registration process must be completed through the House of Justice in Tbilisi.

Additionally, the Justice Ministry has been granted broad powers to monitor and investigate organizations for compliance, including the authority to access sensitive information such as personal data.

Many organizations and media outlets have expressed strong opposition to the law, and several have publicly refused to comply. Noncompliance, including failure to register, carries heavy financial penalties.

Georgia's international partners have voiced serious concerns about the law, which critics argue mirrors Russia's controversial "foreign agents" legislation, a tool widely used by Moscow to suppress dissent and weaken democratic institutions.

EU Ambassador to Georgia Pawel Herczynski has warned the law significantly hampers Georgia's prospects of joining the European Union. He noted Georgia's EU accession process has been put on hold as a result. In addition, Georgia's visa-free travel in the Schengen Zone, a key diplomatic achievement, is now under threat.

Despite this, the ruling Georgian Dream party remains steadfast in its claims that the country is on track for EU membership by 2030.

While the law has drawn international criticism, it has been praised by Moscow. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov, nationalist political philosopher Aleksandr Dugin, State Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin, and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov have all commended the Georgian government for passing the law.

Legal challenges against the law have already been filed. Five lawsuits have been submitted to the Constitutional Court of Georgia requesting the law be suspended. Although the court concluded three days of hearings on September 1, no ruling has been announced.

In response to the law, the United States, a longtime supporter of Georgia's NATO and EU aspirations, announced visa restrictions on Georgian officials involved in passing the legislation and launched a comprehensive review of bilateral relations.

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ecoi.net description:

9 Georgian NGOs added to the register of "foreign agents"; the controversial law on foreign influence came into effect 2 months earlier

Country:
Georgia

Source:
[RFE/RL – Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty](#) (Author)

Published:
1 October 2024

Original link:
<https://www.rferl.org/a/foreign-agent-law-georgia-first-ngo-list-addition/33142246.html>

Document type:
Media Report

Language:
English

Available on ecoi.net since:
23 October 2024

Document ID:
2116300

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(ACCORD)		

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

