

# The Georgia Governance Index 2022



**USAID**  
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საქართველოს პოლიტიკის ინსტიტუტი  
GEORGIAN INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

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**Tbilisi  
2023**



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GEORGIAN INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

## About

The Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP) is a Tbilisi-based non-profit, non-partisan, research and analysis organization. GIP works to strengthen the organizational backbone of democratic institutions and promote good governance and development through policy research and advocacy in Georgia. It also encourages public participation in civil society-building and developing democratic processes. The organization aims to become a major center for scholarship and policy innovation for the country of Georgia and the wider Black Sea region. To that end, GIP is working to distinguish itself through relevant, incisive research, extensive public outreach, and a bold spirit of innovation in policy discourse, and political conversation.

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# Abbreviations

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CEC	- Central Election Commission of Georgia
DRG	- Diagnosis-Related Group
ECHR	- European Court of Human Rights
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
GGI	- The Georgia Governance Index
GIP	- Georgian Institute of Politics
GRECO	- Group of States Against Corruption
GYLA	- Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
ICC	- International Criminal Court
IDFI	- Institute for Development for Freedom of Information
IDP	- Internally Displaced Person
ISFED	- International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
MOH	- Ministry of the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
MRDI	- Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia
NBG	- National Bank of Georgia
NDI	- National Democratic Institute
NSC	- National Security Council of Georgia
OECD	- Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/ACN	- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Anti-Corruption Network for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
OGP	- Open Government Partnership
PAR	- Public Administration Reform
SIGMA	- Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SSA	- Social Service Agency of Georgia
SSG	- State Security Service of Georgia
TI	- Transparency International
UN	- United Nations

## Executive Summary

The Georgia Governance Index (GGI) analyzes and measures the performance of Georgia in four key areas of governance: democracy and human rights (democratic governance), effective state and state institutions (effective governance) social and economic policies (socio-economic governance) and foreign and security policy (external governance). While the index focuses mostly on Georgian state institutions it also includes analysis of other actors, including political parties and civil society organizations.

While numerous indices and rankings include Georgia in their worldwide or regional analyzes, a context-specific, country-focused, in-depth annual exploration of Georgia's performance is still lacking. No other country-based organization has so far made this attempt. While GGI partly complements international indices in terms of both methodology and empirics, it provides a unique inside-out view, as well as innovative methodological tools. GIP's index will communicate Georgia's democratic and economic performance to the Georgian public and a variety of stakeholders to meet increasing demand for a comprehensive report on the subject.

In terms of methodology, GGI employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques and epistemologies. The grading system is based on the GGI Expert Survey which was conducted among 40 Georgian experts working in different domains. The quantitative survey was supplemented by qualitative analysis conducted by GIP's team.

The current report is the second iteration of the GGI. In terms of results, similar to the first report, the 2022 report depicts a bleak picture. Georgia's performance was suboptimal in all four areas of governance. The country's record was especially poor in the area of democratic governance while the effective and external governance areas also received low scores. Social and economic governance received a relatively high score, albeit still low and under the mid-point of the 0-100 scale.

Overall, the 2022 GGI Report and Expert Survey was dominated by foreign and security-related issues which is unsurprising considering the major geopolitical events taking place in Georgia's close geographic proximity and wider Europe. Accordingly, new security-related vulnerabilities have come on top of existing long-term challenges such as judicial reform. These newer challenges include the management of Russia-related security risks and cooling relations with Western partners and Ukraine.

# Key Findings

## Democratic Governance

- **Democratic governance – still the weakest link.** As in 2021, in 2022 democratic governance remained the weakest area among the four governance areas studied by GGI. It also once again received the lowest score in the GGI Expert Survey. The continuous political crisis coupled with a high degree of polarization and radicalization, failure of judicial reform, violence against journalists, and the failure to receive EU candidate status due to democratic regression were among the major challenges faced in democratic governance during the year.
- **Sharp decline in civil society score.** Somewhat unexpectedly, the category of civil society showed the biggest drop in its GGI expert rating in 2022 losing almost half of its score. The reasons behind this may be increasing polarization and political radicalization as well as a policy by the Georgian government and satellite actors to demonize civil society organizations which has hindered their effectiveness and damaged their image as neutral actors. Still these organizations and grassroots protest movements continued to have a significant impact on political and social life in Georgia throughout 2022.
- **Failure of judicial reform remains the Achilles' heel of Georgian democracy.** For two years in a row the provision of justice and failure of judicial reform are being identified as the most problematic categories of all governance areas both by the report authors and surveyed experts. Moreover, similarly to last year, the GGI expert survey again identified the reform of the judiciary as the most pressing issue for 2023.
- **Other old and new challenges to democratic governance** include polarization and radicalization, single-party rule, distorted checks and balances, the abolition of the state inspector's office, and new controversial amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code on surveillance and wiretapping.
- **Positive changes in 2022** include legislative amendments on the election of the prosecutor general and new electoral legislation including electronic voting starting from 2024.

## Effective Governance

- **Effective governance.** Effective governance continues to be another problematic category which received the second-lowest assessment alongside external governance (35 points out of 100) in the GGI Expert survey, coming above only democratic governance. As in 2021, major challenges in 2022 include informal governance, the fight against elite corruption, and the failure of the authorities to extend the state's monopoly on the use of force to all societal segments (such as church and far-right groups) and the lack of progress towards the occupied territories. Borderization and the kidnapping of Georgian citizens in areas adjacent to the occupied territories remained an issue throughout the year.
- **Informal governance and state capture** remained a major challenge in 2022. In the GGI Expert Survey, the fight against informal governance received just 2.5 points out of 100 - the lowest score in all categories. Moreover, while informal governance in previous years largely remained a domestic issue in 2022 it also attained an international character. Georgia's accession to the EU now depends, among other things, on getting rid of oligarchic governance which is among the 12 recommendations stipulated by the European Commission as conditions for granting Georgia EU candidate status.
- **Fighting (elite) corruption** remains the second most important challenge next to informal governance. However, the functioning of enforcement mechanisms against bureaucratic corruption was evaluated positively.
- **Stable performance on public services** received the highest score (50 out of 100) among all indicators of effective governance. Nevertheless, serious gaps and challenges remain: judicial reform, fighting informal governance and oligarchy, and anti-corruption reform including the creation of an independent anti-corruption agency.
- To boost Georgia's effective governance score, GGI experts also provided numerous **recommendations** among which three stood out as most frequently mentioned: judicial reform, anti-corruption reform/creation of independent anti-corruption agency and fighting informal governance and oligarchy.

## Social and Economic Governance

- **Top performer with challenges.** In 2022, Georgia's performance in social and economic governance received the highest score in the GGI Expert Survey (45 out of 100) outperforming other governance areas. Nevertheless, the key challenges identified in previous reports remain unresolved. State authorities lack a comprehensive long-term reform agenda in key areas.

- **Strong economic recovery but growing inflation.** In 2022 Georgia continued experiencing a strong economic recovery accompanied by high inflation and tight monetary policy, which threatens economic growth and inclusiveness.
- According to the GGI Expert Survey **key challenges** in this area include problems in social care policy, rising inequality, social impacts of increased migration from Russia, and increasing prices on pharmaceuticals. On the other hand, introduction of the DRG system was unanimously hailed as a major step forward in 2022.

## External Governance

- **The GGI score of External Governance** decreased in 2022 from 45 to 35 (out of 100). As a result, it shares second place with effective governance. This arises from the failure of the country to deal with the risks and opportunities emanating from the Russia-Ukraine war and the changing geopolitical landscape in Europe.
- **The major positive event** related to Georgia's external governance in 2022 was Georgia finally getting an EU accession perspective. Other positive developments included Georgia playing a role in the mediation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as the increasing strategic importance of Georgia's transit and energy potential amid geopolitical competition between Russia and the West. On the negative side, according to the GGI Expert Survey, major challenges in 2022 included Georgia's confrontational course with Ukraine and the West, failure to get the EU candidate status and the suboptimal reaction to Russia-related security risks.
- According to the GGI Expert Survey, the **main recommendations to boost external governance in 2023** include the improvement and further deepening of relations with the West, the revival of the Associated Trio and improvement of relations with Ukraine as well as the implementation of the 12 conditions from the EU Commission for the granting of EU candidate status.

## Introduction

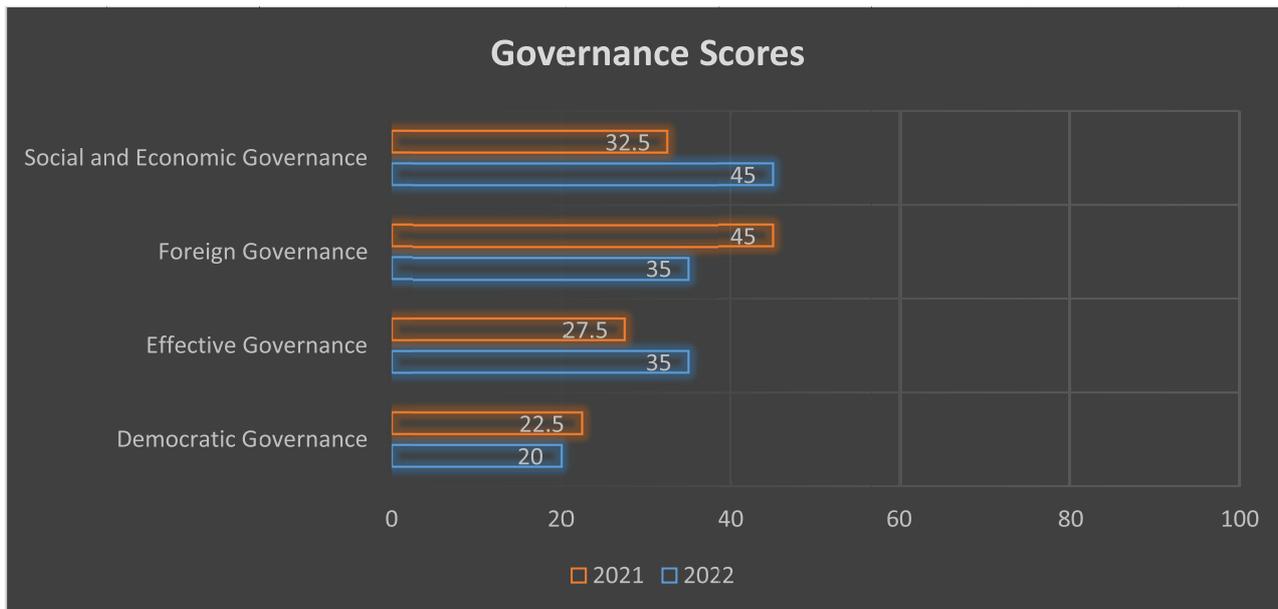
2022 was a year of major geopolitical upheaval in Europe. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and subsequent confrontation between Moscow and the West exposed Georgia to increasing risks and uneasy choices but also opened up unique opportunities such as an EU membership perspective. Global geopolitical uncertainty was accompanied by traditional domestic problems such as polarization, radicalization, informal governance, as well as various socio-economic issues. As a result, the country experienced a continuous political and economic crisis. Hence it is no surprise that all four areas of governance studied by the GGI (democratic, effective, socio-economic and external) suffered from major challenges. Both the analysis conducted by GIP's analytical task force and the GGI Expert Survey were rather critical in their assessments. Similar to the previous year, none of the governance areas received a positive assessment and all failed to pass the important 50/100 threshold (figure 1). However, there were significant differences in the assessments of individual governance areas.

As in the previous year, Georgia's performance on democratic governance continued to be the worst area and was assessed by the GGI Expert Survey very negatively receiving only 22 points out of 100 (figure 1). Both the experts surveyed and the authors of the report identified a lack of judicial provision and failed justice system reform as the most significant challenges of democratic governance in 2022.

The same was the case with the low assessment received for Georgia's performance on effective governance (35 points out of 100, see figure 1). Here, like in the previous year, informal governance and political corruption were deemed detrimental to the good and inclusive performance of the country's institutions.

Last year's best performer - the area of external governance - received a lower score in 2022 (35 points out of 100) and shared second place together with effective governance (Figure 1). Georgia's reaction to major geopolitical changes in the Black Sea area and wider Europe did not meet the approval of the GGI expert panel who provided a more critical assessment of Georgia's foreign policy in 2022. Instead, this time, the GGI Expert Survey gave the highest score to the country's performance in social and economic governance (45 out of 100, see figure 1) significantly outperforming the other three governance areas (Figure 1).

Figure 1: How would you assess Georgia's performance on the governance areas in 2022 (standardized on a scale of 0-100 (best))?



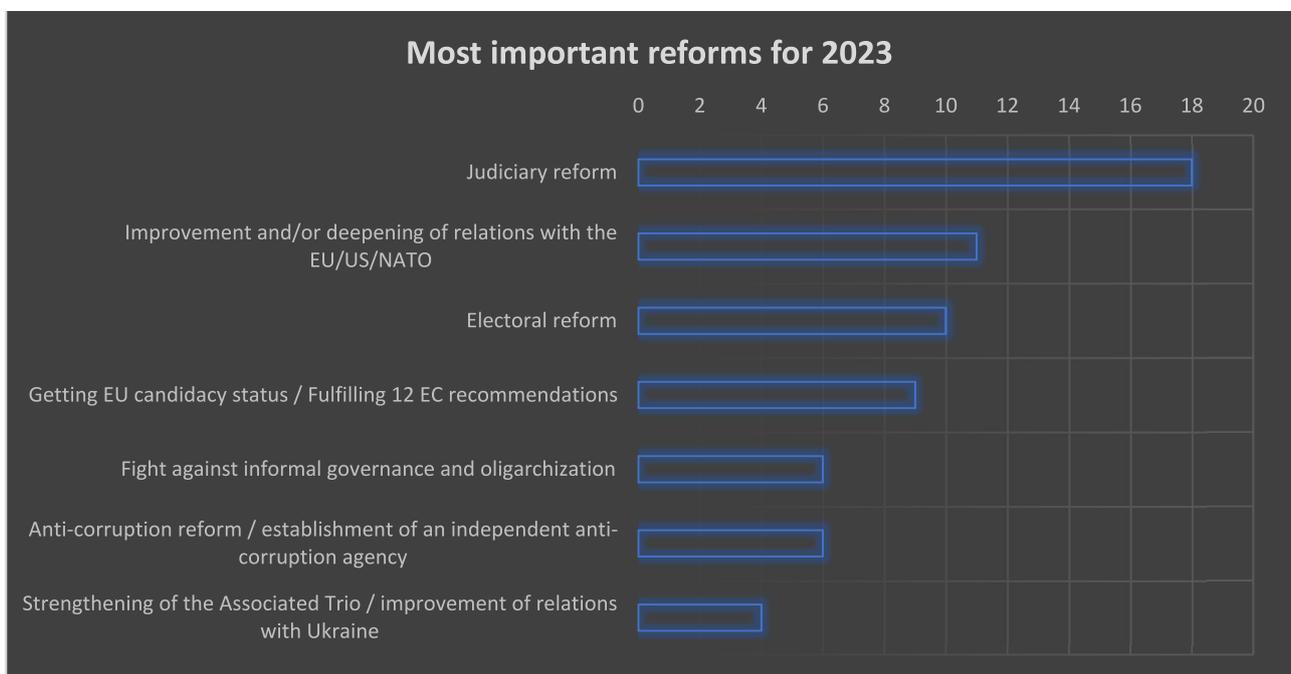
Another important goal of the GGI was to identify the main gaps in each of the four governance areas. Figure 2 shows the aggregated results of all responses received in the GGI Expert Survey. Similarly to the previous year, problems with the judiciary were identified as the single most important issue across all four governance areas. However, unlike 2021, the 2022 GGI Expert Survey was largely dominated by foreign and security political issues (Figure 2). Four out of the seven most mentioned challenges in all categories are related to external governance: the worsening of relations with strategic partners (EU, USA), the management of risks emanating from Russia, the failure to get the EU candidate status and the lack of progress in fulfilling the EU's 12 recommendations as well as the weakening of the Associated Trio and cooling relations with Ukraine (figure 2).

Figure 2: In your opinion, what were the largest challenges in 2022 in Georgia? (all mentions)



Finally, the GGI also mapped and analyzed the most important reform ideas for improving Georgia’s governance performance in 2023. Here, the GGI Expert Survey again delivered unambiguous results which once again highlighted the increasing interconnectedness of the foreign and domestic political worlds. As in the 2021 report, the judiciary reform was identified as by far the most important step needed to improve the country’s performance in all four governance areas analyzed by the index (figure 3). However, half of the reform ideas identified by the experts this year were related to external governance (Figure 3). They include the need to improve and deepen relations with the West (EU, USA, NATO), attaining EU candidate status by fulfilling 12 recommendations and the need to strengthen the Associated Trio through the improvement of relations with Ukraine (figure 3).

*Figure 3: In your opinion, what are the three most important reforms or ideas for Georgia for 2023? (all mentions)*



## The Goal of the Report

The Georgia Governance Index (GGI) studies Georgia's performance in four governance areas: democratic, effective, social and economic, and external. In doing so, the report aims to identify the main challenges and gaps but also the positive developments in different governance areas of Georgia and to provide policy-relevant recommendations on how to mitigate the risks and improve governance quality.

This index is aimed at a wide audience including politicians and political parties, civil society representatives, think-tanks, NGOs, political foundations, international organizations, international and domestic observers, and pundits, as well as to wider public with an interest in Georgian governance affairs. The index was presented in Tbilisi with the aim of better informing the Georgian public and international community about the challenges inherent to Georgia's governance and democratization processes; placing Georgia's reforms in an international context; and advocating for Georgia's Euro- Atlantic integration efforts. The index will help strengthen the accountability of government and political actors to their constituents and promote more transparent governance. Additionally, it will help Georgian government receive constructive feedback from Georgian think tanks, civil society and expert community, on their policies and planned reforms. For civil society, this index will provide a platform to voice their concerns and provide constructive policy suggestion.

## Conceptualization

In terms of the conceptual framework, the GGI utilizes the concept of embedded democracy, which was developed by German political scientist Wolfgang Merkel. Embedded democracy consists of five partial regimes: civil rights, political rights, electoral regime, horizontal accountability, and effective power to govern (Merkel 2004). The five regimes are embedded with each other internally, and further connected to other contextual conditions externally, such as civil society, stateness and socio-economic requisites (Merkel 2004). Various aspects of the concept are components of the majority of the indexes and rankings that measure different aspects of democracy. Some rankings have even been specifically modelled on the concept (e.g. Democracy Barometer). Embedded democracy as a concept consists of several partial regimes which cover aspects of democratic and effective governance as well as including economic and stateness-related contextual conditions, while still maintaining a focus on democratic credentials. In the GGI, we include all partial regimes and context requisites to measure the state of good governance in Georgia. However, we add one additional dimension: external governance with a focus on Euro-Atlantic Integration and peaceful management of security risks. While inclusion of the domain of foreign and security policy is not a usual practice in the measuring of the majority of democracy or good governance indices, its incorporation does add an important methodological and em-

pirical missing link. Georgia, as a EU's neighbor country, significantly depends for its democratization quest on the EU and the USA. Literature on democratization often mentions practices such as lesson-drawing, emulation, conditionality, diffusion, and adoption of democratic norms to underline the external dimension of democratization. Based on this, it is assumed that Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration and democratization are positively correlated, and a degree of Euro-Atlantic approximation as well as peaceful management and adaptation to security risks can be considered as one of the criteria or prerequisites of further democratic consolidation.

## Index Structure

Based on the conceptual framework of embedded democracy, the Georgia Governance Index (GGI) examines the performance of Georgia in four key areas of good governance. Each of the key areas are further divided into sub-categories, which are then individually analysed by the authors of the index and scores are assigned by the respondents to the survey.

- Democratic governance (Democracy and human rights)
  - o Civil and political rights
  - o Electoral regime
  - o Horizontal accountability
  - o Civil society and non-state actors
- Effective governance (stateness and state institutions)
  - o The monopoly on the use of legitimate force
  - o Informal governance and alternative forms of legitimacy
  - o The control of corruption
  - o Effectiveness of the public administration
- Socio-economic governance (social and economic policies)
  - o Public services and competition
  - o Tax and budget policy
  - o Social Policy
  - o Social care and healthcare
- External governance (Euro-Atlantic integration, foreign and security policy)
  - o Russian Invasion of Ukraine: A Special Addition to the 2022 Report
  - o European integration
  - o Relations with the USA
  - o Relations with NATO
  - o Responsiveness to external changes
  - o Effectiveness in the areas of security, conflicts, and sustainability

The detailed definitions of individual categories and sub-categories are provided in the glossary, at the end of the report.

## **Research Methods**

The index utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey of policy experts was used as the main quantitative research tool to measure Georgia's performance in individual categories and sub-categories. The survey data is further supplemented by qualitative content analysis of Georgia's performance in each category. The integration of qualitative and quantitative parts as well as triangulation of the research results were further supported by a rigid review process which involved both local and international experts of surveys and indexes.

### ***Expert Survey***

The universe of respondents to the index's survey consists of scholars and academics, policy experts, representatives of civil society, and the think-tank community. In each area 10 respondents were selected, based on the criteria of political impartiality and academic or policy-relevant subject area expertise.

Respondents from academia were selected based on the following criteria:

- At least one publication on Georgia in a peer-reviewed journal excluding predatory-publishing journals and financed articles;
- No affiliation with a political party or movement.

Respondents from civil society and the policy community are selected based on the following criteria:

- co-authorship of reports & analysis about relevant topics on Georgia and/or frequent public appearances in Georgian/international media;
- No affiliation with a political party or movement.

The expert survey was conducted by using Google Forms and was fully anonymised. The experts were asked to grade Georgia's performance on respective issue areas in different categories as well as to provide their views on major challenges, steps forward and the needed reforms.

### ***Narrative Analysis***

The expert surveys are supplemented by qualitative content analysis carried out by the GIP task force, which consists of resident and affiliated junior and senior analysts. The qualitative analysis draws on content analysis of primary and secondary sources (governmental documents, reports, interviews, speeches, meeting protocols and newspaper articles). To supplement desk research-based data analysis several semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with area experts. Each part of narrative analysis underwent a multi-step review process by local and international experts. Narrative parts on their own do not provide grading scores for respective issue areas, and incorporate expert assessments as a semi-quantitative tool without critical reflection.

## **Limitations**

There are a few important methodological limitations to be acknowledged. Firstly, this is only the second issue of the index and therefore comparable only to a pilot study from 2021. Hence, we cannot conduct a multiyear comparative analysis. Secondly, this is a single country case study which also lacks an external point of reference or comparison to other countries. The study does analyze, however, different governance categories and sub-categories which allows a multi-sectoral comparison of the country's effectiveness. In terms of data collection, the authors of the study struggled with finding up-to-date data on recent developments. Finally, since the report is mostly qualitative with a small-N semi-quantitative survey, we cannot exclude that some information may contain academically biased perspectives.

# Democratic Governance



## Key Findings and Main Challenges

- The continued shortcomings of the judiciary and ongoing court proceedings against the founders and leadership of several media channels remained a challenge in 2022. As in previous years, political polarization and a party system dominated by a single party have posed problems for effective parliamentary oversight of all branches of government.
- Among the setbacks in 2022 was the abolition of the State Inspector's Service by the ruling party and the passing of an amended so-called surveillance law, making it easier for law enforcement authorities to conduct covert surveillance of civilians. The law also extended the list of crimes subject to covert investigative activities.
- Positive developments in 2022 include constitutional changes initiated by the ruling Georgian Dream party concerning the rules for electing the prosecutor general and initiated amendments to the Election Code to introduce electronic voting in at least 70 percent of districts in time for the parliamentary election scheduled for 2024. On the other hand, however, at the end of 2021, parliament hastily adopted legislative changes to simplify the rules for electing the chair and members of the Central Election Commission.
- Compared to last year the "civil society" score of the 2022 GGI expert survey fell by almost half. This may have been caused by rising polarization and political radicalization, as well as the demonization of civil society by political actors, damaging the effectiveness of civil and nongovernmental actors. Additionally, the lack of clear communication by civil society organizations of their activities remains a challenge.

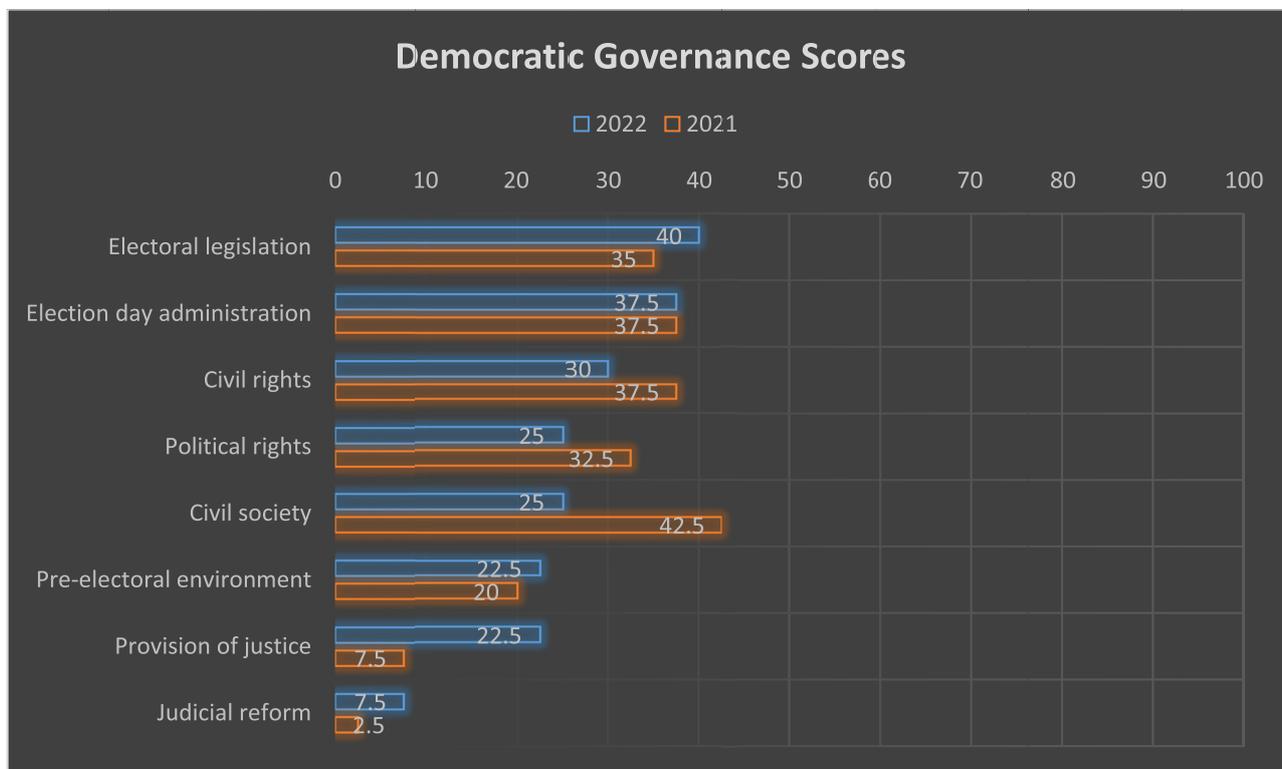
In terms of democratic governance, 2022 was full of challenges and failures. There was no substantial progress either in democratization or human rights. As has been the trend for many years now, this year was marked by political polarization and radicalized political discourse. Further persistent challenges include legal proceedings widely perceived as politically motivated against opposition-aligned individuals and the continued monopoly on power by the ruling party.

Therefore, the GGI expert survey score for democratic governance, which already fell to an all-time low last year, fell further from 22.5 to 20 (on the scale of 100). In terms of the individual indicators, none of them were assessed positively by the surveyed experts (figure 4). Overall, democratic governance, of the three other governance indicators analyzed in this report, by a large margin, remains the worst performing indicator this year.

The biggest drop in score came from the civil society category (figure 4). The reason for this is likely increasing social polarization and radicalization, which makes it difficult for civil and non-governmental organizations to position themselves as neutral actors. Judicial

reform remains a key challenge. Despite a small improvement, this area, like last year, has the worst score within the democratic governance indicator.

Figure 4: How would you assess Georgia’s performance on the following related to democratic governance in 2022? (Aggregated and standardized on a scale of 0-100 (best))



## Civil and Political Rights

In 2022, Georgia has not made any substantial progress in terms of civil and political rights. Progress will largely depend on the ability of the Georgian government to timely and effectively implement the 12 recommendations set out by the European Commission as conditions for EU candidacy.

In 2022, as in the previous year, challenges were more acute in the area of political rights than that of civil rights. While fundamental civil rights are more or less upheld in the country, the deficit of effective mechanisms of oversight over law enforcement and security authorities remains a problem. A negative development in this regard was the so-called surveillance law adopted by parliament in September, which made it significantly easier for law enforcement authorities to conduct surveillance over citizens. This law was adopted amid harsh criticism from both civil society and Western partners (radio Tavisupleba 2022e). The Venice Commission criticized the process for lacking transparency and inclusivity. Major issues identified as a threat to civil liberties include the extension of the list of crimes subject to covert investigative activities and the extension of the timeframe in which the authorities can conduct covert surveillance activities (On.ge 2022b). Contro-

versially, this law was only adopted after the parliamentary majority voted to override a presidential veto.

The Constitution guarantees and protects the freedom of press. However, as in 2021, the media environment remained pluralistic but extremely polarized. The existence of pending court cases against leading figures associated with pro-opposition media outlets remains a worrying trend. One such case however, against Avtandil Tsereteli, the father of the founder of TV company Pirveli, Vato Tsereteli, ended when Tbilisi City Court ruled that the statute of limitations on the crime he was accused of had elapsed. He has now been freed from bail restrictions, meaning he is once again at liberty to leave the country. This can be assessed as a positive development. The ruling came after the court changed the charge against Tsereteli from the more serious offense of money laundering to the lesser charge of fraud (Civil.ge 2022a). However, on the other hand, the imprisonment of Nika Gvaramia, the director of Mtavari TV company, was a significant setback. In as early as 2019, the Office of Public Defender issued an opinion saying that the charge brought against Gvaramia could not be subject to criminal liability and might only be subject to corporate legal liability in exceptional cases (ombudsman.ge 2019).

There have also been worrying developments in the media environment such as, for example, a proposal by the ruling party to amend the Law on Broadcasting in order to ban programs and commercials containing hate speech and incitement to terrorism. While the proposed amendment is supposedly based on anti-hate crime rules that exist in many EU member states, a segment of experts believes that the planned changes risk being abused as a sanction or tool of political persecution against media outlets critical of the government (TI.ge 2022m).

Although the Constitution of Georgia protects the freedom of assembly and expression of every citizen regardless of their sex, religion, faith, political opinion or sexual orientation, the exercise of this right by representatives of LGBT+ community remains a problem. In 2022, as in previous years, the organizers of Tbilisi Pride Week were not able to conduct the March for Dignity (on.ge 2022a), showing that all groups of society are not yet in practice free to express themselves equally. The failure to punish the organizers of violent homophobic rallies on 5 July 2021 despite clear public evidence of their culpability remains a problem (Interpressnews 2022d).

In terms of the protection of property rights and entrepreneurial rights, Georgia's position worsened by 14 points to 26th place, according to the 2022 Index of Economic Freedom. This index run by the Heritage Foundation shows that the country suffered a major setback in the fiscal health component though deterioration was also seen in the components of judicial effectiveness, property rights, business freedom and labor freedom (Bm.ge 2022a). The drop in scores in those areas may affect the country's investment climate.

## Electoral System

Although 2022 was not an election year, in line with European Commission's recommendations, the ruling party launched a process of review of the Election Code, aimed at improving the electoral system. This process, however, was flawed from the very outset as the ruling Georgian Dream party did not invite one of the leading civil society organizations on the issue, the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), to the first meeting. That move drew criticism from other civil society actors and prompted another organization, the Georgian Young Lawyers Association (GYLA), to leave the meeting in protest (Civil.ge. 2021). Leading this process in this way could cast doubt on its credibility. The Georgian Dream proposal, based on recommendations from the European Commission, to hold electronic elections beginning in 2024 was a somewhat positive move. The introduction of electronic voting will speed up the announcement of preliminary results and will likely increase trust towards election results. However, there still remain challenges in this area that may undermine trust towards election results. The proposed system is that electronic voting will apply in 70 percent of districts while the remaining 30 percent will continue to vote in the traditional fashion, leaving open the possibility of fraud in these districts (Civil.ge 2022m). The system of electronic voting proposed will not allow for remote voting with the use of ID cards, which will mean that Georgian citizens living abroad will still face some challenges while voting. These issues undermine support for the proposed changes among the opposition (Civil.ge 2022n).

At the time of writing, the final decision on the rules for the election of a new chair of the Central Election Commission (CEC) was yet to be made. The best-case scenario would be a rule requiring at least a two-thirds majority vote in parliament. The President of Georgia, in a positive move, refused to nominate the incumbent chair as a candidate because of his past failure to gather sufficient votes in parliament twice (რადიო თავისუფლება 2022c). On the other hand, at the end of 2021, parliament hastily adopted an amendment simplifying the rules for the election of the CEC chairperson and CEC members. ISFED and Transparency International Georgia assessed that move as a breach of 19 April accord (on.ge 2021) while the US Embassy described it as a rushed and unnecessary step (Formula News 2021). Hence, much will depend on how the CEC election will be held and whether this time around, any candidate succeeds in receiving sufficient support in parliament (at least two-thirds of the vote of the entire composition of parliament) to take up the position for a five-year term instead of six months.

## Horizontal Accountability and System of Checks and Balances

In Georgia, as a parliamentary republic, the legislative body has the power of oversight over various branches of government. One important mechanism of this type is Minister's Hour where a specific minister has to report to MPs and answer their questions. Between January and November 2022, parliament used this mechanism nine times (Parliament.ge. 2022a). According to the data available on the website of the parliament, in the period from

January-October 2022, MPs used the power of interpellation – the power to formally ask questions of members of the executive – five times with three questions amongst coming from opposition MPs (Parliament.ge. 2022b).

In 2022, as in previous years, political polarization and the dominance of the ruling Georgian Dream party in every branch of government posed challenges to the effective implementation of parliamentary oversight. As such, the capacity of opposition parties to provide oversight has been limited. For example, the opposition does not have the numbers in parliament to set up an inquiry into the case of ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili (კუნჭულია 2022).

No less problematic was the boycotting by the ruling party of an extraordinary session of parliament summoned by the President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili upon the demand of 46 opposition MPs on 18 July. The absence of the ruling party majority meant that the session could not reach quorum (Interpressnews 2022a). Such actions undermine efforts to overcome polarization and make progress in the implementation of the European Commission’s recommendations.

2022 also saw Georgian Dream take steps against the president. The ruling party filed a complaint at the Constitutional Court against the president, who was elected with the support of the ruling party, accusing her of abuse of power (Civil.ge 2022c). Civil society assessed it as “political revenge” against the president (Civil.ge 2022h). According to GYLA, the president did not abuse her powers to appoint and dismiss ambassadors, which was the allegation the government sued the president over, (GYLA 2022). A further weakening of the institution of president and curbing of presidential rights poses a serious challenge to horizontal accountability among branches of government.

Problems in the justice system persisted in 2022 too. Although one of the recommendations of the European Commission is the reform of justice system, the Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary believes that the reform strategy proposed by the working group set up within the Committee on Legal Affairs does not fully tackle the deficits in the system. Consequently, doubts have been raised that far from bringing needed fundamental change to the justice system, the proposals would amount to only “façade” reforms (TI.ge 2022n). The election of judges Murusidze and Gvritishvili (two controversial figures affiliated with the so-called clan of judges) as members of High Council of Justice in October 2022, further undermined trust in the judiciary.

However, constitutional changes initiated by Georgian Dream to change the rules of election for the post of prosecutor general may be assessed as a positive step. According to this initiative, the prosecutor general shall be elected by a three-fifths majority in parliament. In the event that any of the candidates fails to receive such support twice, the prosecutor

general shall be elected by a majority of the total composition of the parliament for a term of only one year (Interpressnews 2022e). According to experts of the field, the proposed rule, though flawed, is better than the existing system (Interpressnews 2022e). The amendment will contribute to the improvement of trust towards the institution of the prosecutor general.

The decision by the State Inspector's Service of the Justice Ministry to sanction the government over the case of ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili was followed by the ruling party hastily drafting a bill to abolish the State Inspector's Service at the end of 2021. According to the US Ambassador, that step "undermined the government's accountability" (biZinaSvili 2022) while according to the UN representation in Georgia, it "sends a chilling message to independent institutions of human rights protection" (menaRariSvili 2022a). The State Inspector's decision was quickly overturned in the courts (tabula 2022) and two new institutions were created to replace the State Inspector's Service: The Special Investigative Service and the Personal Data Protection Service.

2022 was an important year from the perspective of accountability as the term of office of the incumbent public defender expired in early December and the election of an independent and largely trusted person as the public defender is one of 12 recommendations issued by the European Commission as conditions for granting EU candidate status to Georgia. On 31 August, Georgian Dream proposed a new rule for electing the public defender, whereby applicants for the position are evaluated by a working group set up by the chair of parliament (cqifuriSvili 2022a). As there was no need to change that rule, the decision of the ruling party raised suspicions in civil society circles that Georgian Dream could be trying to assert greater control over the process of selecting candidates (ibid). In the end, parliament was not able to reach consensus and none of the candidates for public defender managed to get required 90 votes (Interpressnews 2022f). Consequently, the election of a new public defender will depend on cooperation and consensus with opposition parties, which may contribute to building trust in parliament and improving the effectiveness of its oversight.

## Civil Society and Non-State Actors

Civil society in Georgia has a special role in terms of supporting and monitoring the process of institutional reform. However, this does not translate into high levels of public trust towards non-governmental organizations. According to results of a recent survey, just 22 percent of the population trust the nongovernmental sector, 20 percent distrust it and 43 percent neither trust nor distrust it (CRRC 2021-22).

One of the factors influencing public trust towards the civil society sector are critical statements made by the leadership of the ruling party. In particular, Georgian Dream leaders have made statements suggesting that some NGOs are acting as quasi political parties and questioning the financial transparency of some organizations (კობახიძე 2022). Most of

civil society is critical of the government, a situation the ruling party responds to with an attitude of intolerance, causing polarized perceptions in society. However, the majority of NGOs are not financially stable, and their existence depends on international donor funding. Thus, their activity depends on their transparency both in terms of substance and finances, which is monitored by international donors. Therefore, claims against the financial transparency of nongovernmental sector are not based on evidence.

The EU report on the implementation of EU-Georgia Association Agreement underlines the positive role of the civil society sector in Georgia (European Commission 2022). This document emphasizes the capacity of the sector to hold government accountable, both at national level and, to a more limited extent, at local level. Although the civil society sector is staffed with qualified people and is quite respected on the international arena, its role inside the country is not properly appreciated. The main problem for civil society organizations in this regard is insufficient communication with citizens about their activities in a transparent and clear manner. Activism, however, a narrower category of civil society, enjoys higher public trust than civil society organizations more generally. Despite low public trust in civil society, the majority of the population, 56 percent, believe that no political party expresses their interests and see rallies organized by civil society activists as an alternative channel for expressing their protests or opinions (NDI 2022). Mass rallies organized by civil society activists after Russia's invasion of Ukraine were a good example of that. Soon afterwards, the largest rally of recent years was held in connection to the decision to withhold EU candidate status from Georgia. It was also organized by civic activists and attracted numerous people, but lacking a political component, these rallies dispersed quickly. There is a demand in society for consensus-based politics to increase trust towards the political elite and focus public deliberation on topics of national importance. This, however, is only possible through political and civil coordinated efforts.

The media is a non-state actor that has also played a vital role in 2022 in terms of informing society about pressing topics and mobilizing society. However, media freedom has suffered a setback, with its indicator having substantially worsened compared to previous years. In particular, while in 2021, Georgia was 60th among 180 countries as assessed by the Press Freedom Index, in 2022, it went down to 89th place with a score of 59.30 (RSF 2022). A lower score in the Press Freedom Index may reflect the extreme politicization of media in the country, the imprisonment of the owner of a major media outlet, and physical attacks on journalists (წერეთელი 2022) and cameramen (degnani 2022).

As in the case of civil society, public trust towards the media is low. In particular, according to the results of a CRRC survey, only 14 percent of population trust the media, 25 percent does not trust it, and 55 percent neither trust nor distrust it (CRRC 2021-22).

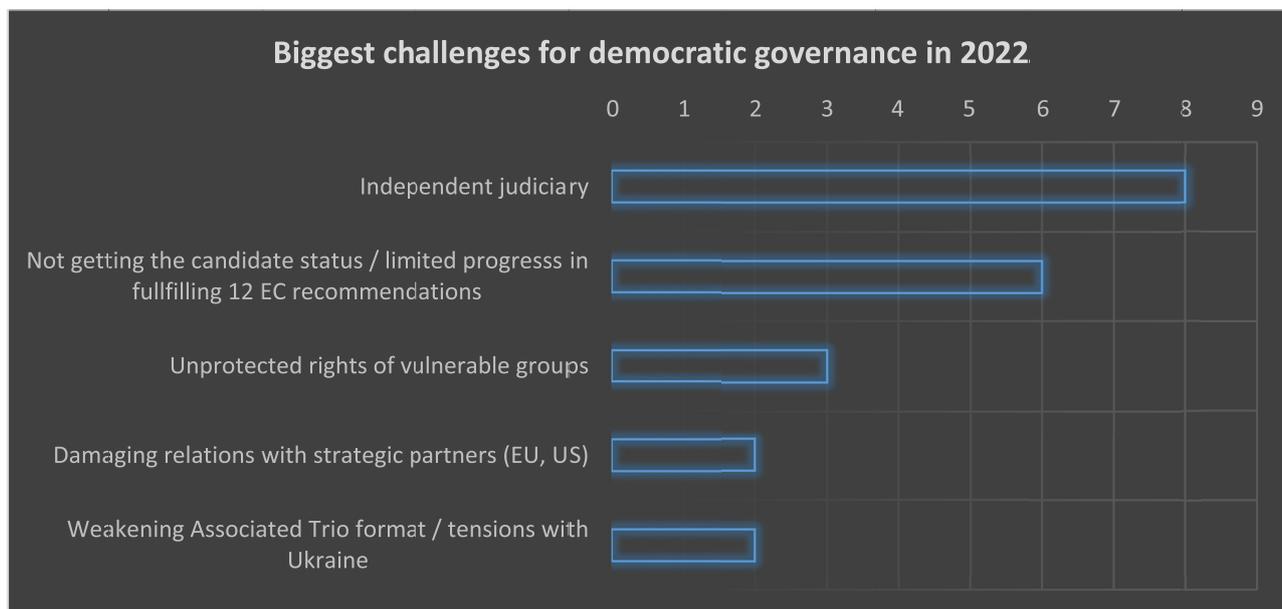
Although the media in Georgia is rather diverse, it is, at the same time, extremely polarized (European Commission 2022) and consequently, the public lack access to objective sources of information. The media environment is also overly politicized and specific media outlets are seen as being partisan, which leads to low public trust in the media. The media

environment in 2022 was also marked by the granting of a nationwide broadcast license to a TV channel known for its far-right, pro-Russian political stance. Alt-Info, which since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, has switched to direct and open dissemination of pro-Russian propaganda clichés, and is causing anger among a large segment of population. This has further intensified the polarization of the media environment (IDFI 2022b). Since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the causes of political polarization in Georgia are not only of a domestic nature. Once a subject of consensus among the Georgian political class, foreign policy has increasingly become a subject of division between political parties. Accordingly, media polarization has worsened to reflect these political processes taking place in the country.

## Summary

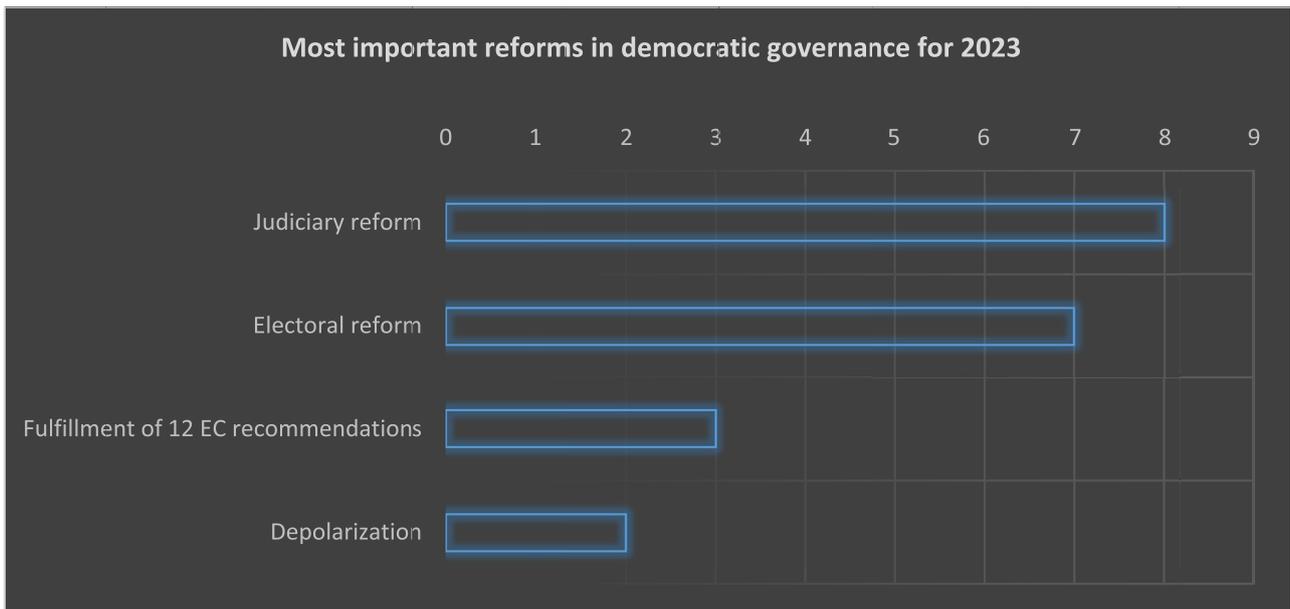
As in the previous year, in 2022, the main challenge facing Georgia in the field of democratic governance is that of the insufficient independence and impartiality of the judiciary and the lackluster nature of reform to it (figure 5). Additionally, lower scores were given by surveyed experts to the civil society sector, which traditionally was a relatively well-performing metric, that could be caused by the increasing polarizations and the lack of clear communication between the civil society and citizens. A multitude of geopolitical, foreign policy and international political factors, such as the failure to receive EU candidate status and deteriorating relations with Western strategic partners and Ukraine, have emerged in the GGI expert survey as new challenges (figure 5). This can be explained by the fact that experts associate Georgia’s increasing diplomatic distance from the West and democratic backsliding with each other. On the other hand, 2022 saw some small positive steps, in the form of changes to the Election Code and the rules of election of the prosecutor general.

*Figure 5: In your opinion, what were the three largest challenges related to democratization and human rights in 2022 in Georgia? (Only challenges with two or more mentions, GGI Expert Survey)*



The list of the most important reforms needed remained similar to that of the previous year. The justice system remains at the top of the list (figure 6). The need for electoral reform, was also frequently mentioned (figure 6). What was new were the reforms associated with the implementation of the 12 preconditions given by the EU for candidate status. The survey also revealed a perceived need for depolarization as one of the main barriers to the country’s political and democratic development (figure 6).

*Figure 6: In your opinion, what are the three most important reforms or ideas related to democratic consolidation for Georgia for 2023? (Only ideas with two or more mentions, GGI Expert Survey)*





# Effective Governance

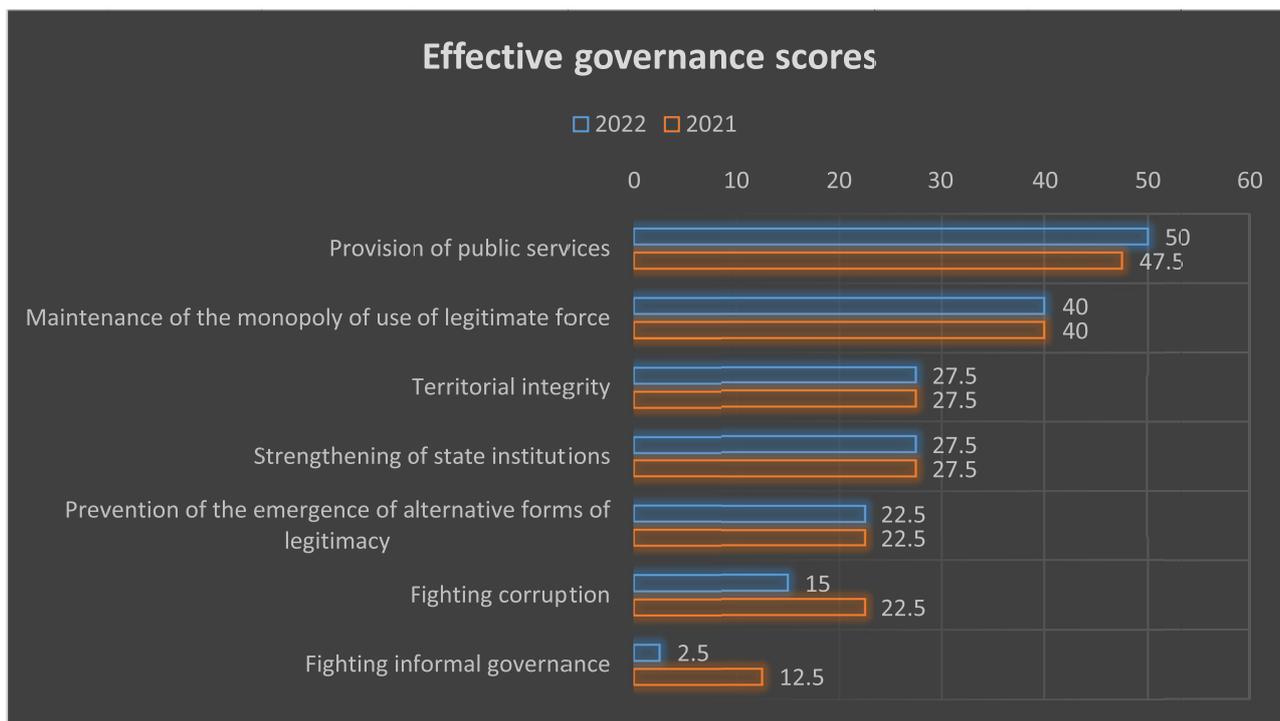


## Key Findings and Main Challenges

- In terms of the state's monopoly on the use of legitimate force, the main challenge remains the lack of territorial control over Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Though outside these regions, it also remains limited in relation to the Georgian Orthodox Church and far-right groups that restrict constitutional rights of LGBT+ people. Illegal borderization by Russian occupation forces and the abduction of citizens of Georgia near the administrative boundary line persisted in 2022 as well. The International Criminal Court concluded its investigation into the situation in Georgia in December 2022.
- Informal governance remains a core challenge for effective governance in Georgia. Until this year, informal governance was mainly an impediment to the internal democratic development of the country. But now, in the face of an opportunity for EU candidate status, it has become a major impediment to the country's European integration - deoligarchization is among the 12 recommendations set by the European Commission for EU candidate status.
- The fight against political corruption and state capture, tightly intertwined with informal governance, remains a serious challenge. On the other hand, the working of enforcement mechanisms against bureaucratic corruption was evaluated positively.
- The provision of public services is still evaluated most positively by experts. This result stems from the fact that the State Services Development Strategy 2022-2025 was developed, which will contribute to the harmonization of approaches and practices of state services and uniform service quality control. The existence of appropriate professional skills and the importance of political neutrality in the civil service remains a problematic issue, on which the Public Service Bureau has taken a number of positive steps in terms of promoting the development of professional skills and raising awareness of civil servants.

The GGI Expert Survey assigned a low score (35) to effective governance, though that is a bit higher than last year's result. In the effective governance category, the highest score was assigned to the public services effectiveness sub-indicator, its score increased by 2.5 compared to 2021. The fight against informal governance was assigned the lowest score. Its score decreased significantly (by 10) compared to 2021. Also, negative dynamics were also present in control of corruption. The state's ability to fight corruption was scored at 15 points - 7.5 points lower than 2021. The scores of the sub-categories on the monopoly on the use of legitimate force, territorial integrity, state institutions, and the prevention of the alternative forms of legitimacy, have not changed from 2021 (Figure 7).

Figure 7: How would you assess Georgia’s performance on the following related to effective governance in 2022? (Aggregated and standardized on a scale of 0-100 (best))



## The Monopoly on the Use of Legitimate Force

In terms of the monopoly on the use of legitimate force, the main challenge remains the issue of territorial control. As in previous years, no significant diplomatic breakthrough occurred in 2022 and Georgia’s two occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia remain under the effective control of the Russian Federation (ECHR 2021). Russian occupation forces continued the illegal so-called “borderization” of the territory along the occupation line in the Tskhinvali region (Ssg.gov.ge 2022a, Ssg.gov.ge 2022h, Ssg.gov.ge 2022q). That is to say, the installation of border infrastructure and creeping capture of territory hitherto used by the local population for military occupation purposes. Also, occupation forces continue to illegally detain citizens of Georgia in the territories adjacent to the occupation lines with Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region (Ssg.gov.ge 2022c, Ssg.gov.ge 2022g, Ssg.gov.ge 2022j). The international community has continued to perform a vital role in monitoring the situation in the occupied territories and mediating between the parties at times of humanitarian crises. In this regard, the most important event of the 2022 related to the decision of the International Criminal Court, which completed its investigation of the situation in Georgia in relation to crimes against humanity and war crimes in the context of an international armed conflict between 1 July and 10 October 2008 (ICC 2022). According to the ICC, no military officials from the Georgian side are suspected of any war crimes. Instead, based on the investigation, the ICC issued arrest warrants for three individuals who, in the context of an occupation by the Russian Federation, are responsible for unlawful confinement, torture and ill-treatment, hostage taking and the subsequent unlawful transfer of ethnic Georgian civilians (ICC 2022). In 2022, the role of the Incident Prevention

and Response Mechanism (IPRM), which is facilitated by the EU Monitoring Mission and the OSCE, a line of communication that was agreed under the aegis of the Geneva International Discussions, was still significant. With help from international actors involved in these mechanisms, the government was able to secure the release of citizens abducted from the area close to the occupation line (Ssg.gov.ge 2022e, Ssg.gov.ge 2022k, Ssg.gov.ge 2022m, Ssg.gov.ge 2022n, Ssg.gov.ge 2022o, Ssg.gov.ge 2022s, Ssg.gov.ge 2022t, Ssg.gov.ge 2022u, Ssg.gov.ge 2022v) during 2021 and 2022. Although a number of citizens detained in previous years were released in 2022, other citizens of Georgia who were placed in illegal detention by occupation forces in previous years remain in custody.

Regarding the occupied territories and the situation there, in December 2022, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a resolution on “The De-occupation and the peaceful resolution of the Russia-Georgia Conflict” (რადიო თავისუფლება 2022d). In the resolution, parliament emphasized the key priority of the country: the peaceful de-occupation of Georgian territory and the safe and dignified return of IDPs and refugees to their homes and called on the Russian Federation to ensure the de-occupation of these regions, annual the illegal recognition of their so-called independence, terminate the ethnic violence and crimes, and ensure constructive engagement in the Geneva Talks. The resolution also appeals to international society to take a consistent, uniform and decisive position against the occupation and annexation policy by Russia (რადიო თავისუფლება 2022d).

Even outside the occupied zones in areas controlled by the government, however, events in 2021 showed that the state faces challenges in terms of the monopoly on the use of legitimate force. An example of this was the failure of the state to enforce the law against the Georgian Orthodox Church and far-right groups (during the events of 5 July 2021 when extremists were allowed to run riot and attack LGBT+ activists (GIP 2021). In contrast to 2021, Tbilisi Pride, the local organization defending LGBT+ rights, did not announce a March for Dignity in 2022 (Civil.ge 2022g) for “having no space and possibility to hold the March for Dignity” (Civil.ge 2022g). This allows us to assume that, in 2022, the state’s monopoly on the use of legitimate force remains limited in relation to the Georgian Orthodox Church and far-right groups that restrict the constitutional rights of LGBT+ persons.

## **Informal Governance and Alternative Forms of Legitimacy**

The existence of alternative informal structures of power and authority in parallel to the formal authorities in Georgia (informal governance) has been recognized as a major challenge to government effectiveness in Georgia over the past few years. Discussion of informal governance in Georgia is most often a reference to the influence held by the founder of the ruling party and billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili who wields informal influence over all branches of the government without formally holding a public office (TI. org 2022b) The scale of his influence has been assessed as matching the definition of state capture (TI.org. 2022a). This phenomenon of informal governance and the existence of alternative sources of legitimacy persisted in 2022 as well. With Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the ensuing

geopolitical changes, the issue of informal governance has become especially topical in the current year. In this regard, the year 2022 saw three distinct phases in which the informal influence of Ivanishvili was expressed.

The first part of the year was a period of status quo in which the degree of Bidzina Ivanishvili's influence over government remained consistent with the state of affairs in 2021. In particular, the key executive positions in Georgia continued to be held by individuals chosen for their loyalty to Bidzina Ivanishvili and/or who worked for his companies in the past (TI.ge. 2020, TI.ge. 2022i, Police.ge. 2022, Nsc.gov.ge.2022, Mrdi.gov.ge.2022. Ssps.gov.ge 2022).

Bidzina Ivanishvili's influence over the legislature and judiciary is also such that suspicions abound in both international and local circles that it is Ivanishvili, and not these institutions, who is the real decisionmaker when it comes to major issues (Jam-news 2022a). The executive government is not subject to effective checks and balances as parliamentary oversight is weak because the ruling party enjoys an absolute majority (TI.ge 2022l, TI.ge 2022t). The judiciary is under the total control of an influential group of judges believed to be close to the government (TI.ge 2022q, TI.ge 2022o, TI.ge 2022k).

The second phase came after the Russia-Ukraine war opened up an unexpected opportunity for Georgia to gain EU candidate status. Until this point, informal governance was mainly an impediment to the internal democratic development of the country. But now, in the face of this new opportunity, it became a major impediment to the country's European integration. After the Georgian government officially applied for EU candidate status on 3 March 2022 (რადიო თავისუფლება 2022a), the European Parliament amended its resolution on "Violations of media freedom and the safety of journalists in Georgia" (European Parliament 2022a) to include an amendment about Bidzina Ivanishvili (European Parliament. 2022b). In the amendment, the European PMs refer to Ivanishvili as "the sole oligarch" who plays a destructive role in Georgia's politics and economy, and express concern about "Ivanishvili's exposed personal and business links to the Kremlin, which determine the position of the current Government of Georgia towards sanctions on Russia" (European Parliament 2022b). Furthermore, an amendment to the resolution contains calls on the European Council and democratic partners "to consider imposing personal sanctions on Ivanishvili for his role in the deterioration of the political process in Georgia" (European Parliament 2022b). Moreover, to "implement the commitment to "de-oligarchisation" by eliminating the excessive influence of vested interests in economic, political, and public life" is one of 12 recommendations made by the European Commission after its refusal to grant EU candidate status to Georgia (European Commission 2022b).

In the third phase, which began after the EU Commission imposed the conditions for EU candidacy, informal governance intensified as the ruling party adopted institutional approaches and harsh rhetoric to protect Ivanishvili's social and financial position. Although the ruling party flatly denies Ivanishvili has any influence over the executive, legislative and judicial branches (Interpresnews.ge 2022c), with two parliamentary hearings Georgian

Dream adopted a draft law on de-oligarchisation (Parliament.ge. 2022e, მენაღარიშვილი 2022b) analogous to a similar law of Ukraine. But because of contextual differences between Ukraine and Georgia, this law would not address the problem of informal governance in Georgia (პაპუაშვილი 2022, ზურაბაშვილი 2022) and is drafted in such a way so as to not apply to Bidzina Ivanishvili. The term “oligarch” as defined in the draft law applies to businessmen bankrolling opposition political parties in Georgia. This raises suspicions among the political opposition and civil society that Georgian Dream seeks to use the European Commission’s aforementioned recommendation to restrict political competition (ზურაბაშვილი 2022, რადიო თავისუფლება 2022f). At the same time, worthy of noting the populist rhetoric of the ruling party and related parliamentary groups capitalized on public fears of a potential war with Russia and aims to create an image of Bidzina Ivanishvili as a guarantor of peace (ღარიბაშვილი 2022, კობახიძე 2022).

In the context of pressure from opposition parties and CSOs, Georgian Dream sent the draft law on de-oligarchisation to the Venice Commission and the OSCE for their joint opinion (ცქიფურიშვილი 2022b). The European Union in Georgia positively assessed the Georgian Dream’s decision. According to their note, it is “important to consult international standard setters and implement their recommendations” (European Union in Georgia 2022). At the end of 2022, the committee of the foreign affairs of the European Parliament adopted an annual report on the fulfilment of the Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union (European Parliament 2022d). Nevertheless, the amendment in the draft report again highlighted Bidzina Ivanishvili’s role as the country’s main oligarch, his links to the Kremlin, and called for sanctions on him (European Parliament 2022c). In the final report, Ivanishvili’s excessive influence over Georgia’s political, economic, and social life is mentioned, but the billionaire is no longer referred to as an oligarch but as a former prime minister of Georgia (European Parliament 2022c). Furthermore, sanctions are not mentioned in the text, but, de-oligarchization is indicated again as one of the prioritized recommendations for Georgia before it is granted EU candidate status (European Parliament 2022d).

## **The Control of Corruption**

As in 2021, in 2022, corruption in Georgia is linked to the problem of informal governance and the state capture. The authors of the Corruption Perception Index, developed by the Transparency International Secretariat, provide the following description of the corruption context in Georgia: “The influence of the ruling party’s founder, formally retired Bidzina Ivanishvili, over key institutions meets the definition of state capture [...] His party, Georgian Dream, has in recent years solidified its grasp on the judiciary and law enforcement bodies, effectively killing the political momentum needed to fight corruption” (TI.org. 2022b).

In 2021, the main subject of criticism from anti-corruption nongovernmental organizations was the clear inactivity of the government in developing and regulating anticorruption

policy. In particular, the Interagency Council to Combat Corruption, a body responsible for determining, monitoring, and assessing the country's anti-corruption policy as well as fulfilling international recommendations, had not convened since 2019 (TI.ge. 2021a; TI.ge. 2021b). Also, the Open Government Partnership Program (OGP) had been suspended since 2019 (TI.ge. 2021a. TI.ge. 2021b). Furthermore, according to 2021 data, the Secretariat of the Anticorruption Council did not actually exist as not a single person worked there for more than seven months, and by the end of 2021, an anti-corruption action plan for 2021-2022 had not been adopted (TI.ge. 2021a. TI.ge. 24.12.2021). The anticorruption policy of the country has not seen any notable progress in this regard in 2022 either. The country has not adopted a new action plan for the Open Government Partnership (OGP) reform (OpenGeorgia.gov.ge 2022) and has not presented an anticorruption action plan for 2022 (IDFI 2022a). While one of the European Commission's recommendations was to create an independent anti-corruption agency equipped with special investigative powers and a rigorous mechanism to combat high-level corruption (European Commission 2022b), the ruling party suspended the creation of an independent anticorruption agency, the concept of which was developed with the involvement of Transparency International Georgia. Instead, the government established an anticorruption agency whose leader will be appointed by the prime minister (Parliament.ge 2022d). Accordingly, CSOs did not evaluate positively the mentioned initiative, an efficient mechanism for fighting against political corruption (TI.ge 2022r, TI.ge 2022v). Moreover, Georgia is the only OECD/ACN member state that has not yet joined the OECD anticorruption assessment process (TI.ge 2022u). According to the anti-corruption NGOs, "if the Georgian government does not agree to adopt the framework document of the assessment already approved by all the countries of the network by the end of 2022, the fifth round of OECD/ACN monitoring of anticorruption environment will not be carried out in Georgia in 2023" (IDFI 2022d). "The Georgian government's passivity regarding the participation in the 5th round of OECD/ACN monitoring process harms the reputation of Georgia and calls into question the agenda of anti-corruption reforms in the country" (IDFI 2022d).

In terms of the enforcement of the law, the main challenge in 2021 was the lack of political will to enforce the law against high-level political corruption (TI.ge 2022s). The data available from open sources do not show any improvement in this area in 2022. According to data published by the State Anticorruption Service, this service has again undertaken active measures against bureaucratic corruption (Ssg.gov.ge. 2022b, Ssg.gov.ge. 2022f, Ssg.gov.ge. 2022l, Ssg.gov.ge. 2022r). With regard to high-level corruption, 2022 saw the arrest of the former deputy head of the State Security Service, Ioseb Gogashvili, over a money laundering criminal case being considered by the Anticorruption Service (Ssg.gov.ge. 2022i, Ssg.gov.ge.2022p) Property and assets owned by Ioseb Gogashvili, his family and close circle have been frozen by court order (Ssg.gov.ge. 2022p). Gogashvili had formerly appeared on the list of alleged high-level corruption cases (TI.ge. 2022s) though until 2022, the State Security Service never showed any interest towards the alleged corruption of Gogashvili or any other high-level corruption. Gogashvili was arrested only after he released material alleging rigging of local elections in 2021 (რადიო თავისუფლება 2022b). This prompts suspicion that the government used the pretext of anti-corruption to arrest opponents.

Alleged cases of corruption in state procurement tenders awarded to individuals with close ties with the ruling party (Ti.ge. 2022h, TI.ge. 2022c, Ti.ge. 2022h, TI.ge. 2022c, TI.ge. 2022d, TI.ge. 2022x, TI.ge. 2022p), and revolving door phenomena and related corruption (TI.ge. 2022g) were all observed throughout 2022. Furthermore, flawed asset declarations filled out by high level officials remained a problem in 2022, making it impossible to monitor conflicts of interest between the business interests of high-level officials and their official duties (TI.ge. 2022a). This was the issue that the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO 2022) underlined in its fourth round evaluation report on Georgia as an important recommendation that the country partially fulfilled.

## **Effectiveness of the Public Administration**

Important steps were taken toward the implementation of public administration reform in the first half of 2022. Though delayed, the Public Administration Reform Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2023 was drawn up (MFA 2022). The HR forum was organized by the Civil Service Bureau to review and analyze the public service reform concept. The 2022 EU report on the implementation of the Association Agreement notes that the implementation of Government of Georgia Decree #629 on Approval of the Rules of Policy Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (adopted on 20 December 2019 and enacted on 1 January 2020) has progressed and the Georgian ministries increasingly use the relevant handbooks for policy planning (European Commission 2022).

A notable public administration reform this year included the development and approval of the Public Service Development Strategy for 2022-2025 and guiding methodologies (SDA 2022). The aim of the strategy is to support the design of new and improved services, to improve the quality of service delivery, and introduce more flexible approaches to this end. The need to create such a strategy arose, primarily, because of the fact that with the rapid introduction of services, there was a huge difference between the approach and practical implementation of services by various service providers, making it impossible to ensure overall quality. That, for its part, was caused by a flawed legal framework, an unregulated and unstructured monitoring framework, a shortage of experienced human resources, problems in delivering services and information to vulnerable groups, and the absence of service pricing practices. To ensure effective public services, the strategy sets out 17 basic principles that will help bring services under one set of standards. These principles include customer-centric orientation, accountability, fast response, transparency, personal data protection, and other approaches that are central to quality assurance and systematization. The budget document was drafted in accordance with the action plan and for 2022-2023, it amounted to GEL 425 020 (State Services Development Strategy Action Plan Budget 2022-2023). The core of the budget is financed by partner donor organizations.

To support public administration, the Council of Europe this year developed a Handbook on Open Local Government and Public Ethics, in which the need for public trust in the de-

livery of services and determining policy is emphasized (COE 2022). The handbook is based on the priorities of the Congress of the Council of Europe for 2021-2026, which underlines the importance of promoting the quality of local and regional democracy and citizen participation. In particular, the document notes that in order to renew and sustain confidence in public administration, effective mechanisms are needed for the implementation of, and compliance with, standards of ethical conduct. The handbook covers four areas in which public ethics and accountability are key to the development of public services stressing that public services that are more responsive and accountable to people will work better for people and society as a whole.

A key challenge faced by the public sector is the lack of certain skills among civil servants. To tackle this problem, the Civil Service Bureau organizes professional training sessions, but there is a need to improve work in this area. Civil servants face serious problems reconciling policy planning with budget management. In its 2022 report, the State Audit Office, when describing the results of its audit of public administration reform, underlines shortcomings in the effective management of the professional development of civil servants (SAO 2022). Of four ministries inspected by state auditors, two – the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure – did not have an HR development strategy, whereas the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture had strategies that were developed and approved in 2021 and hence, many of the envisaged activities were ongoing. Despite the activities carried out by the Civil Service Bureau to facilitate the development of strategic HR management guidelines, the situation in this area needs improvement. The State Audit Office issued five recommendations for effective management of the professional development of civil servants (SAO 2022). These recommendations will help align professional development plans with strategic development aims and improve the process of devising and introducing methodologies for the identification of professional development needs.

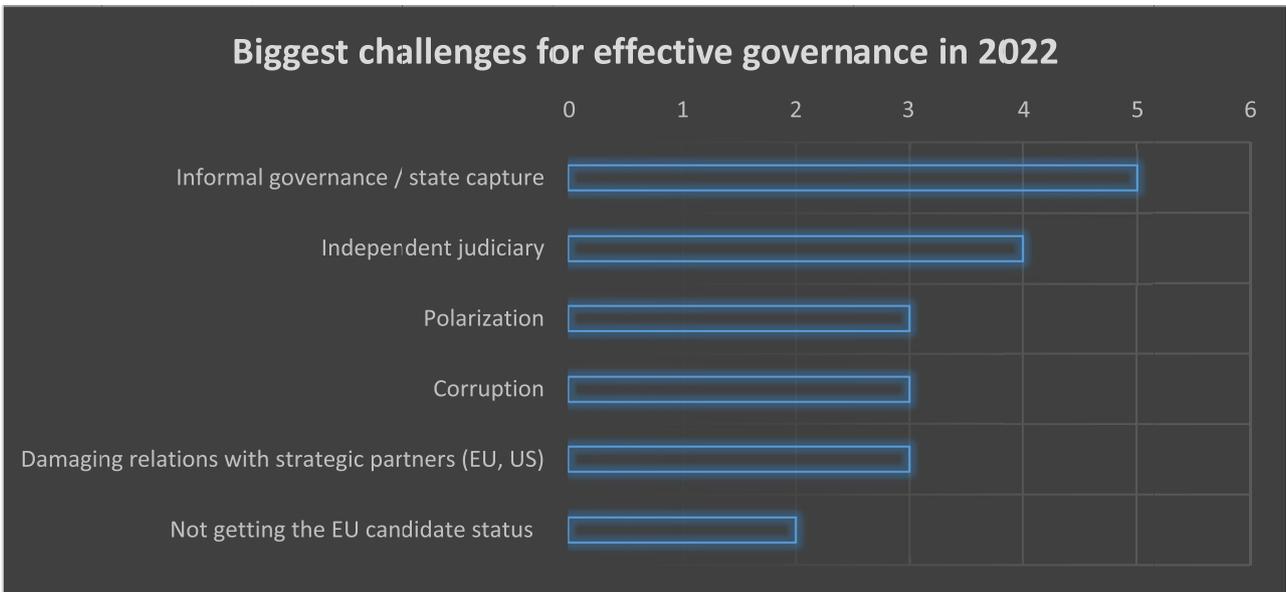
## Summary

In sum, in 2022, as was the case in 2021, territorial control remains a major problem in the area of effective governance. The monopoly of the state on the use of legitimate force remains limited. The persistence of informal governance that has set back anticorruption policy in the country has become an enormous barrier to the country's European integration. Compared to the other categories, positive dynamics can be observed in the field of public administration, due to the approval of the 2022-2025 state services development strategy. This strategy envisages the development of fast and effective services with uniform standardization, higher levels of civil servant qualification, and better quality of service delivery and monitoring.

Accordingly, the surveyed experts named informal governance/state capture, the lack of an independent judiciary and polarization (figure 8) as the most problematic areas in terms

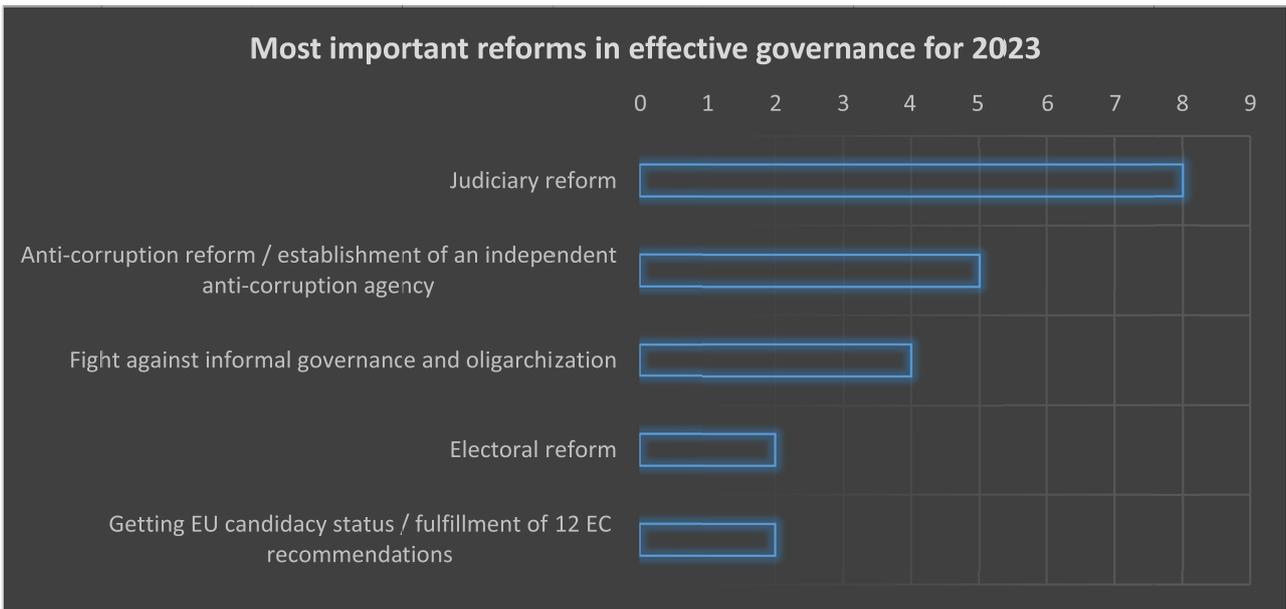
of effective governance.

Figure 8: In your opinion, what were the three largest challenges related to effective governance in 2022 in Georgia?



At the same time, in the area of effective governance, the experts named legislative reform, anti-corruption measures, the establishment of an independent anti-corruption agency, and an end to informal governance through de-oligarchization as priorities (figure 9).

Figure 9: In your opinion, what are the three most important reforms or ideas related to effective governance in Georgia for 2023? (Only ideas with two or more mentions, GGI Expert Survey)





# **Socio-economic Governance**



### Key Findings and Main Challenges

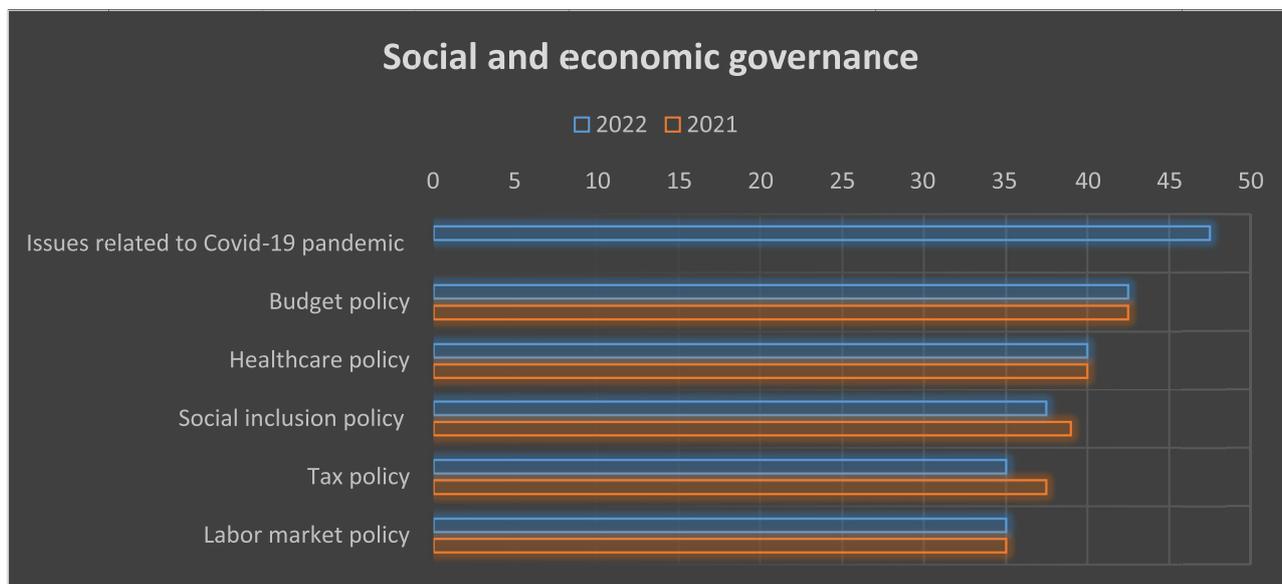
- In the GGI survey, social and economic governance received the highest score, outperforming three other governance areas. The relatively positive score is attributed to the management of the Covid-19 pandemic, a more balanced budget policy, measures aimed against high unemployment in the country, and steps taken towards lowering inflationary pressures such as the high price of pharmaceuticals.
- The unemployment rate fell compared to the previous year but remains high. As high unemployment and poverty remain systemic problems in the country, the score on labour market policy did not improve compared to the previous year and received the lowest score among all socio-economic policy areas. In addition, as a consequence of the high inflow of Russian citizens into the country, the perception of inequality has widened and dependence on tourism revenues, money transfers and remittances has grown. This makes the Georgian economy more exposed to external shocks and more heavily reliant on consumption rather than the production capacity of the country as a driver of economic growth.
- According to the assessments given by the surveyed experts, the most positive step in the area of health and social policy in 2022 was the introduction of the Diagnosis Related Group (DRG) system which is used to review medical service rates, transfer budget amounts, classify services and generate common tariffs for them. The DRG system implies the establishment of uniform tariffs for services in various hospitals and strict control of co-financing by patients.
- According to 2022 data, over 17% of the Georgian population are beneficiaries of social assistance, which is a record and a very high increase compared to the previous year. An additional 133,750 people now receive social assistance, which is a 5% increase. This was caused by the increase in the number of people who were unemployed during the pandemic. However, in contrast to the previous year, when the National Employment Agency was mainly focused on the containment of the Covid-19 pandemic and redistribution of relief packages, in 2022 the Agency began to actively organize employment forums and programs, including for people with disabilities.

Building on the V-shape recovery from the economic impact of COVID-19, the Georgian economy continued to grow in 2022 and real GDP growth rate surpassed 10%. This growth is mainly fuelled by increased consumption driven by international arrivals and money transfers from Russia since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. This has caused a rise in inflation, which was over 11%, far beyond the inflation target of 3%. Inflation remains driven by increased food prices, due to Georgia's high dependence on food imports, as well as by increased demand on leisure, hospitality and tourism related economic sectors. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, inflation has been further fuelled by growing commodity and energy prices globally. FDI inflows and external trade are recovering from the large

drops observed since the outbreak of the COVID-19. Higher than expected growth and increased demand contributed to increased tax receipts for the state budget, lowering the budget deficit. Unemployment is falling from peak levels of 22% in 2021, but remains very high as nearly one in five people in the labour force is jobless. According to recent (2022) public opinion polls, jobs, rising prices and poverty remain among the top concerns for Georgians. Increased prices and cost of living is particularly acute for the most vulnerable groups, such as those living under the poverty line. Overall, the Georgian economy remains a consumption-based economy, funding its growing expenditure through money transfers and remittances rather than through an expansion in production capacity.

In 2022, social and economic governance was the best performing indicator in the GGI expert survey, surpassing the other three governance areas at 45 points out of 100. Yet this overall score is still quite low and the surveyed experts identified many shortcomings to be fixed in the coming years. Looking at various policy areas within social and economic governance, there is only a negligible fluctuation in individual scores compared to the last year (figure 10). The management of the Covid-19 pandemic (a category that was added this year to the survey) received the highest score (47,5) which could be explained by the passing of the most active phase of the pandemic regionally and globally (figure 10). Similarly, to the previous year, the lowest score was assigned to labour market policy and social inclusion policy also remains a drag on Georgia’s overall performance (figure 10). The differential between the scores of individual policy areas within social and economic governance is smaller than in other areas (12-point gap between highest and lowest score) which suggests that different socio-economic policies tend to be implemented in a similar manner and yield similar results. The overall result, including even the highest score, remains below 50 points on a 100-point scale.

*Figure 10: How would you assess Georgia’s performance on the following areas related to socio-economic governance in 2022? (Standardized on a scale of 0-100 where 100 means “very effective” and 0 means “very ineffective”)*



## Economic Framework and Labor Market

### *GDP growth*

Real GDP growth for the first eight months of 2022 reached 10.3% (Geostat 2022a) which is roughly twice higher than the potential growth rate (5%). According to World Bank forecasts, the economy is expected to grow 8.8% by the end of the year (World Bank 2022a). The Asian Development Bank (ADB) projects a comparatively lower growth rate of 7% by the end of 2022 (ADB 2022). This growth is mainly driven by increased arrivals of international visitors and a boost in net value of money transfers (62% y-o-y) (World Bank 2022b) resulting in increased aggregate demand.

The number of arrivals of international travelers in Georgia was 4.3 times higher (576.5 thousand) in the first quarter of 2022, and double (1049 thousand) in the second quarter of 2022 compared to the same periods in 2021. The sharp rise in international arrivals contributed around 3.7 billion GEL to the economy, in the form of expenditures of international visitors in the first half of 2022. This rise in international arrivals is only partially related to the lifting of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. The main driver of the increased inflows are arrivals from Russia which grew over 500% (six times) in the first half of 2022 compared to 2021. In the second quarter of 2022, 49.2% of international visitors were Russian citizens (Geostat 2022b). This is because Georgia's visa-free regime for Russian citizens made Georgia the top destination for Russian citizens trying to escape international sanctions and the military mobilization announced by Putin in September 2022.

The growth in money transfers goes hand in hand with the increased inflow of international visitors and mainly comes from Russia. Money transfers from Russia in January and February 2022 were below 30 mln USD accounting for around 13 % of overall transfers received in Georgia. Since April, however, money transfers from Russia rose to above 130 mln USD, making up around half of total money transfers to Georgia. This peaked in May 2022 when money transfers from Russia amounted to 314 mln USD, a nine-fold increase compared to May 2021 (NBG 2022).

### *Inflation*

The annual inflation rate in Georgia had reached two digits by the end of 2021 and grew further in 2022, reaching 11.5% in September 2022 (y-o-y change). This is significantly higher than the 3% inflation target. To manage inflationary risks and expectations, the National Bank of Georgia (NBG) increased interest rates by 50 basis points in March to 11%.

As in previous years, inflation was mainly driven by price increases in food and non-alcoholic beverages (17.6%) (Geostat 2022c). This is because Georgia remains highly dependent on food imports and food prices remain highly sensitive to fluctuations in exchange rates, and in particular the depreciation of the Georgian lari in recent years. In 2022, food prices were further raised by the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulting in constrained

supplies of grains from Russia and Ukraine. The other major sectors fueling inflation were restaurants and hotels (15.7%), transport (14.1%) housing (12.2%) and recreation and culture (10.4%) (Geostat 2022d). This is related to increased inflows of international arrivals to the country since the outbreak of the war in Ukraine. The spikes in global energy prices also increased utility tariffs and fed inflation in all product categories.

### ***Trade and FDIs***

Owing to economic growth and increased consumption, the Georgian lari has been appreciating throughout 2022. In January - October 2022, the nominal value of the lari against the dollar rose by 10.86% (Samugia, 2022). In September 2022 the increase in the real effective exchange rate y-o-y was 18.3%. Despite the appreciation of the lari, exports increased by 40% in the first half of 2022, however, this was offset by growth in imports of around 36.5% (y-o-y) fueled by strengthened demand. As the overall value of imports tend to be twice that of exports, Georgia's trade deficit widened by 40% (y-o-y) in 2022 (World Bank 2022b). FDI inflows have been badly affected by the outbreak of the pandemic. In 2020, investment inflow reached its lowest level since 2005, dropping from 1.3 billion USD in 2019 to only 590 mln USD in 2020. FDI inflows started to recover in 2021, reaching 1.2 bln USD by the end of 2021. In 2022, FDI inflows continued to grow, reaching almost 1 bln USD in the first half of the year alone. The major sources of FDI were the UK and the Netherlands, which accounted for around one third of FDI to Georgia in the second quarter of 2022 (Geostat 2022d).

### ***Labour market***

Unemployment in Georgia in the second quarter of 2022 stood at 18%, down from 22% in 2021. The unemployment rate remains very high. Moreover, only two thirds of the employed workforce is hired, while the remaining third is self-employed. Self-employment usually comes in the form of small-scale agricultural activity of households owning small pieces of land in the regions (Akhvlediani 2021). This explains why urban unemployment remains higher than rural unemployment in Georgia.

Unemployment has been falling from the peak levels observed in 2021 for both men and women. As in previous years, in the first half of 2022, unemployment remained higher for men than for women, fluctuating around the traditional gap of 5 % points. The labour participation rate also increased for both sex categories, but the increase was higher for men (0.5%) than for women (0.1%) feeding further the gap in the labour participation rate up to 24% favouring men's participation in the labour force. Unemployment remains highest among the youth, reaching 40% for those aged between 20-24 and 28% for those aged 25-29.

## Fiscal policy

Thanks to the higher-than-expected growth of the Georgian economy, in the first half of 2022, the state budget received more receipts than planned (102.7% fulfilment rate) (Ti.ge 2022e). Tax revenue, which was the main contributor, increased by GEL 1.8 billion compared to the first half of 2021. This resulted in a 33.6% increase (y-o-y) in tax receipts (IMF 2022). Public expenditure, on the other hand, was lower than planned, reaching only 96.6% of planned levels for the first half of 2022. As a result, the budget deficit in January-June 2022 fell to just a third of its previous level (1002 mln GEL planned to 373 mln GEL in reality). This fall in the budget deficit was not caused by cuts in public spending on social security. In fact, public spending on the Universal Healthcare Programme matched planned expenditure on it and the Public Health Protection Program exceeded the plan with an actual spend of 112.4% of the projected figure in the first half of 2022. However, there was a lower spend on the budget allocated to the COVID-19 management program. Out of GEL 500 million assigned for the programme, 464 million GEL was spent by the end of August 2022. According to Transparency International, an additional 200 million GEL will be needed by the end of the year (Ti.ge 2022w). Public debt decreased from 49.5% in 2021 to 42.5% in June 2022. Together with strong economic growth surpassing 10%, the appreciation of the lari also contributed to the reduction of public debt as government debt (old and new) in lari terms fell.

## Social Policy

A sharp increase in prices, particularly on food and other basic goods meant that the official subsistence minimum rose to 247.3 GEL in September 2022. Compared to figure for the same period of 2021 (216.3 GEL), this is 14.3% increase of 31 GEL. The increase in the minimum subsistence is particularly acute to the most vulnerable groups, such as people living under the poverty line. Considering inflationary trends, in June, state assistance for socially vulnerable children was increased from 100 GEL to 150 GEL, but this level of assistance remains too low (around 50 USD) to enable universal access to basic goods, due to high prices on food, basic consumer goods and medicines.

According to the latest data, the share of people living under the poverty line declined from 21.3% in 2020 to 17.5% in 2021. However, public perceptions of poverty levels tell a different story from the official statistics. According to a recent public opinion poll (NDI 2022) 67% of respondents think that poverty has increased over the past years in Georgia. Nearly half of respondents (45%) report that they can afford less than five years ago (NDI 2022). In addition, around a third (30%) of respondents said that they struggled to buy food in every month of 2022. Overall, as in previous years, jobs (for 36% of respondents), rising prices (for 35% of respondents) and poverty (32% of respondents) remain among the top concerns of Georgians.

2022 marked the launch of two large-scale public programs. Firstly, in February, the gov-

ernment launched a public employment program to replace social benefits with jobs for around 200,000 people from socially vulnerable groups who are able to work. According to the Georgian minister of labour, by September 2022 the program had provided jobs for around 23,000 people. Secondly, in October, with the support of the World Bank and Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Georgian government launched a Human Capital Program to promote investment in health, education and social protection. The program is the largest World Bank investment in Georgia worth 400 mln USD and co-financing by the AFD brings an additional 100 million EUR to the program. The program aims to improve access to high quality education, provide better targeted social benefits and strong preventive healthcare with lower costs of treatment and medicine (The World Bank 2022).

## Social Care and Health Care

According to 2022 data, more than 17% of the Georgian population received social benefits, a notable increase (around 5%) on the pre-pandemic figure (SSA 2022). The pandemic particularly exacerbated the problem of unemployment. While in 2020-2021, the State Employment Support Agency was mainly focused on the provision of social packages within the scope of the governmental anti-crisis plan to tackle specifically pandemic-induced unemployment, in 2022, the Agency began to actively perform its main function. In 2022, the State Employment Support Agency shifted from mitigating pandemic-induced unemployment to the creation of new jobs, which primarily implies helping job seekers and potential employers connect with each other, organizing employment forums, and mass interviews for employers. According to the Agency, employment through employment forums stands at 18%-20%, on average. Among the vocational training courses offered by the Agency, the most popular in 2022 were the courses in the hotel industry and restaurant business sector as well as teaching which involves work with children with disabilities. The Agency also introduced a 1-4 months internship program which paid interns GEL 200. The Agency developed a program for subsidizing the salaries of people with disabilities, envisaging the financing of 50% of such salaries for a period of three months (MoH 2022a). A report by the health minister to parliament says that from 1 March-20 October 2022, 23,000 capable persons from socially vulnerable groups were employed for public jobs, of which more than 100 were terminated for various reasons. However, the political opposition alleged that the program is being used as an instrument to engage in voter bribery (აზარამკვილი 2022). To determine the effectiveness of the aforementioned employment programs, it is important to regularly assess the level of satisfaction of employed people as well as the results of their activity in order to prevent employment programs from being focused on quantity rather than quality.

As regards the Labor Inspectorate, 2022 saw the completion of a three-year EU twinning project - Improving the standards of employment conditions/relations as well as health and safety at work in Georgia. According to the report, 14 technical regulations were developed within the scope of the project, including on ensuring natural or artificial light at work, and minimum requirements for the placement of signs for safety and health at work

(მრომის ინსპექცია 2022). In 2022, a repeat inspection of 86 clinics was carried out, which revealed violations of various provisions of the Labor Code towards medical personnel engaged in the Covid-19 management process (MoH 2022a). However, it is not clear what measures were taken to eliminate those violations. Moreover, discussing and raising awareness of them in society is just as important for ensuring accountability and transparency. The government developed an IDP resettlement program which began in January 2022. According to the minister, around 2,000 flats were handed over to IDPs in six months. Over the next three years, it is planned to ensure housing for up to 13,000 IDP families (MoH 2022b). In this case, it is important to discern whether flats for IDPs are well-equipped, how are they prioritized, what guarantees are provided to them, and what kind of communication takes place between relevant agencies and IDPs. These details are often ignored, triggering dissatisfaction and protest among IDPs.

In the area of health care, a healthcare state program was approved on 12 June 2022, which increased financing for disease prevention programs (Matsne 2022). The largest-scale change in the area of health care in 2022 was the change of the universal health care financing model. In particular, the so-called DRG (Diagnosis Related Groups) method is to be introduced to medical institutions, which was planned to start in October but will be piloted in November for the first three months (MoH 2022c). The DRG system is used to review medical service rates, transfer budget amounts, classify services and generate common tariffs (ვერულავა 2022). This means that service tariffs must not differ between hospitals and co-funding by patients must be subject to strict control. In particular, co-funding may range between 0% and 30%, depending on social status. For the first violation of this rule, a hospital will get a warning which, in certain cases, amounts to a GEL 1000 fine, while in case of getting a second warning, a hospital will be removed from the universal health care program (აზარაშვილი 2022). However, after being removed from the universal healthcare system, a hospital may continue to operate independently, which raises risks and skepticism among healthcare workers. In particular, they think that in such cases, hospitals may find it impossible to continue work. However, in the minister's opinion, the country has excess hospital beds and hospitals and consequently, it will not create a problem. According to him, plans also exist to develop primary health care to ease the burden on the hospital sector. Plans to establish a minimum wage for medical personnel under the DRG system are also in hand (Bm.ge 2022b). A minimum wage system has been introduced in state hospitals since 1 August and the minimum wage for medical personnel has increased by 30% (Interpressnews 2022b). However, it is also important to carry out a selective contracting of hospitals in order to ensure that hospitals that participate in the universal health care program meet established standards.

The Covid-19 pandemic remains a challenge, though cases of complications and deaths have notably decreased. According to the ninth report of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC 2022), as of 9 August 2022, a total of 1 710 049 cases of coronavirus were registered in the country (excluding the occupied regions) of which 1 679 621 recovered, whereas 16 877 died. According to the report, as of 1 July 2022, the total of 2 903 548 vaccine shots were administered. As many as 1 271 642 individuals were

fully vaccinated against Covid-19, including 255 928 individuals getting booster shots too. According to IRI data from 2022, 43% said that they were vaccinated whereas 47% said they did not intend to get vaccinated (IRI 2022). According to the same data, 64% of population was happy with the government's measures against the Covid-pandemic versus 33% who were unhappy. With the decrease in the number of deaths caused by Covid-19, the number of tests and vaccinations decreased too, therefore, official number of covid patients may not reflect the actual number of people infected with the virus. Despite statistics showing an easier recovery from Covid-19, better data and correct diagnosis are important in identifying and preventing possible post-covid complications.

In pharmaceutical policy, a novelty in 2022 was the addition of Turkey to the list of recognized countries in mid-January. This, according to government estimates, will save around GEL 180-200 million in the future (აზარაშვილი 2022). According to the health minister, today "tens of millions of lari have been saved by the population on the same medications they purchased in previous months" (MoH 2022). This has been complemented by an electronic prescription system as well as the prescription of generics. Furthermore, the inspectorate of pharmacies and hospitals has begun to study the effectiveness of enforcement of regulations surrounding the sale of prescription drugs.

The next step is the introduction of reference pricing for medicines, which will curb unfair competition in the market (თოფურია 2022). In particular, companies with better marketing will no longer be able to sell the same product at a higher price. The Ministry plans to select reference countries for prices and to set a fair margin on companies in order to determine the maximum limit on particular medicines. Nevertheless, it has been reported that "Turkish medicines in Georgia only meet a small part of the demand for a particular medicine" (მარგველაშვილი 2022). Furthermore, there is a risk of fake medicines coming from Turkey, which needs to be managed.

## Summary

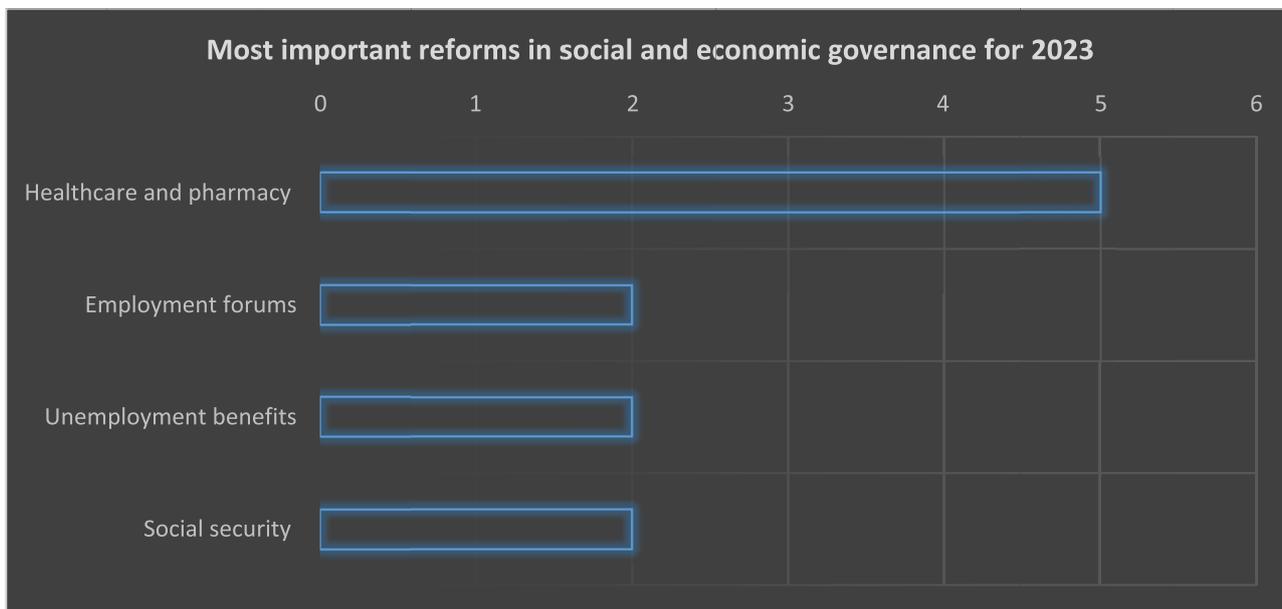
In 2022, socio-economic governance was more positively assessed by the experts' survey than other areas and moved to the top of the index rating, outperforming all three other areas of governance. However, according to the surveyed experts, many serious challenges remain. Among the top challenges are shortcomings in social care policy and management of threats emanating from Russia and their social effects. The challenges also include increased inequality due to the inflow of Russian migrants, the underdevelopment of primary health care system, increased costs of medication, and undeveloped publicly owned medical organizations.

On the other hand, in the assessment of the experts, the main positive step in 2022 was the introduction of the DRG system (the highest number of positive responses). Among other positive steps named by the experts were the opening up of the Turkish pharmaceutical market, the introduction of reference pricing on medicine, the introduction of employment

forums, fiscal policy (the management of debt levels and the deficit), and the approval of a working version of the human rights strategy for 2022-2030.

Key recommendations made by experts for 2023 include improving the vocational education system, boosting electronic services, making the DRG method universally binding on all medical clinics, the development of primary health care, the selective contracting of medical institutions, supporting the development of publicly owned medical organizations, and the opening of negotiations for free trade agreements, development of fair and effective social care strategy, and the introduction of minimum wage and progressive taxes.

*Figure 11: In your opinion, what are the three most important reforms or ideas related to social and economic policy for Georgia for 2023?*





# External Governance



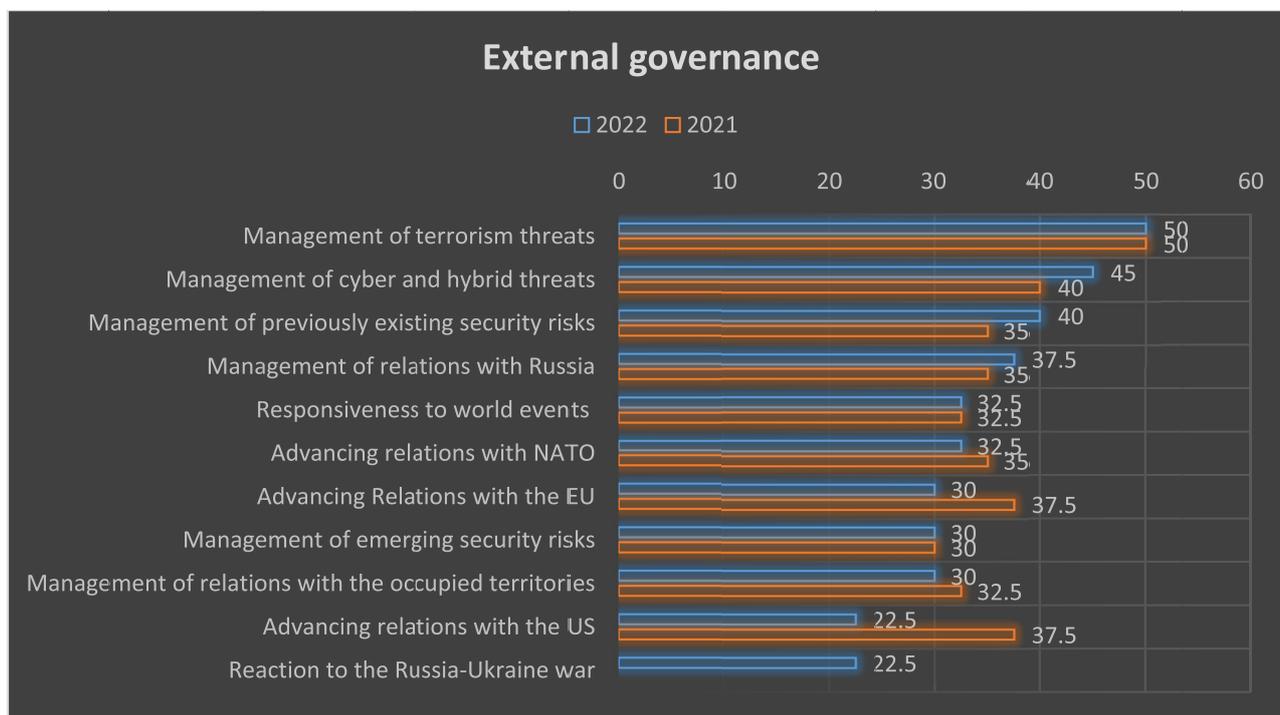
### Key Findings and Main Challenges

- 2022 has been a year of flux in foreign policy terms. In the wake of the war in Ukraine, Georgia struggled to adapt to the changing geopolitical environment, and has failed to react in a coherent and rational way to the risks and opportunities involved. This situation is reflected in the GGI survey score. Compared to 2021, Georgia's external governance score decreased in 2022 and went down from first place to joint second.
- Challenges faced this year included deteriorating relations with Georgia's key strategic partners - Ukraine and the West, the failure to obtain EU candidate status, detaching Georgia from the other two Associate Trio countries (Moldova and Ukraine), and Georgia's poor response to threats coming from Russia.
- On the other hand, relatively positive developments included receiving the European perspective from Brussels, increased importance of Georgia's energy and transit role, and Georgia's role in mediating between Armenia and Azerbaijan.
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine and developments related to the war caused closer interlinkages between Georgia's domestic and foreign policy arenas. While Georgia's cautious position towards Russia is partially justified given the huge imbalance of military power, the main challenge is the domestic imperative of fulfilling the EU's 12 conditions for granting candidate status, which in turn affects the country's effective foreign policy, raising the risks of giving up the historic opportunities.

From the perspective of external governance and security, Georgia's state policy is assessed through five indicators: (1) European integration, (2) relations with the USA, (3) relations with NATO, (4) responsiveness to external changes, and (5) effectiveness in the areas of security, conflicts and sustainability. This section of the report measures the performance of Georgia in the aforementioned five areas throughout the year based on narrative analysis and expert survey. The reaction of Georgian government to the Russian invasion of Ukraine is measured as the special edition.

Compared to 2021, the external governance score regressed notably and fell from first place to joint second (shared with the Effective Governance) with 35 points out of possible 100 (figure 12). The experts negatively assessed the deterioration of relations with the USA (fell by 15 points) and Georgia's stance on the Russia-Ukraine war (the lowest assessment). On the other hand, the highest assessment was given to effectiveness against terrorism and cyber-threats (figure 12).

Figure 12: How would you assess Georgia's performance on the following issues related to foreign policy and security in 2022 on a 100-point scale, where 100 means very effective and 0 means very ineffective?



Throughout 2022, the performance of the Georgian government in external governance was largely determined by global developments, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the rising prospect of EU enlargement, and mobilizing the collective West around the new global security architecture. On this background, the radical fall in Georgia's external governance score was caused by increasingly tense relations with its traditional strategic partners - the USA, Ukraine and Brussels. In addition, the unstable internal political environment and weak reform agenda remain longer term challenges.

### Russian Invasion of Ukraine: A Special Addition to the 2022 Report

2022 was a decisive period for geopolitical shifts and redistribution of power as it is becoming clear that the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February and the ongoing war will lead to the revision of the rule-based international order. After Ukraine displayed a strong defense capability and prevented Russia from seizing Kyiv, Western states and organizations have rallied around the country in a show of unprecedented solidarity. The West, which is the key foreign policy vector for Georgia, is engaged in a radical reevaluation of its security architecture and intensive political activity against Russia of the sort not seen since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In this process, the political and geopolitical value of Ukraine is increasing for the West. Therefore, Georgia's relations with Ukraine, as an important strategic partner, is particularly significant and it is therefore included as a special addition to the 2022 foreign gover-

nance index. In this area the Georgian governance score is 22.5 and evaluated as “ineffective” by the experts on the panel.

Of Georgia’s five strategic partners – the USA, Azerbaijan, Turkey, Romania and Ukraine, the latter is one of Georgia’s most significant long-term allies. On the international level, Tbilisi supports Kyiv on almost all platforms: it supported the UN resolution condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the call for International Criminal Court to initiate an investigation into war crimes, the decision to expel Russia from the UN Human Rights Committee (UN 2022a; ICC 2022; UN 2022b). However, Georgia did not vote for the European Council resolution recognizing Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. Georgian Dream MPs explain that this was because the resolution contained a demand for the Georgian government to release what it called political prisoners, including former president, Mikheil Saakashvili (Civil.ge 2022p).

Despite this aforementioned support, ambiguous rhetoric coming from political circles within and close to the ruling party, and some equivocal decisions by Georgia have caused a notable cooling of relations between the two countries. The first statement by Prime Minister Gharibashvili after the start of hostilities, in which he stated that Georgia did not intend to join sanctions imposed against Russia, caused dissatisfaction in Kyiv (RaribaSvili 2022). Because of Georgia’s lacklustre support to Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky even recalled his ambassador for consultations, which denoted a sharp decline in diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Georgian government responded to Ukraine’s actions with radical rhetoric alleging that opposition-aligned former Georgian officials within Zelensky’s government were consciously creating tensions between the two countries. The Georgian ruling party even went as far as to accuse Kyiv of applying double standards and waging a hybrid war against Georgia (Samkharadze 2022b).

This was further aggravated by the absence of direct communication and the lack of official visits by Georgian officials to Kyiv, in stark contrast to Western leaders who actively displayed their support to Ukraine through visits. Also, the refusal to allow an address by President Zelensky to the Georgian parliament, which became common practice in Western states. Initially, the Georgian side even rejected Kyiv’s invitation to Ukraine. A visit of a Georgian parliament delegation to Bucha and Kyiv took place only after pressure from civil society increased on the government (Samkharadze 2022a; Civil.ge 2022d).

Thus, in terms of relations with Ukraine, one of Georgia’s crucial strategic partners, Tbilisi experienced a notable regression (Kakhishvili 2022) at a time when a further strengthening of relations should have been a priority for the country.

## **Approximation to the EU**

2022 proved to be a year of historical opportunity for Georgia in terms of European integration which is a constitutionally declared goal of Georgia. After the Russian invasion of

Ukraine, Brussels took a fundamentally new step in terms of Eastern enlargement. Alongside Ukraine and Moldova, Georgia submitted its application for membership. Kyiv and Chisinau were granted candidate status whereas Tbilisi got a European perspective. The existence of a real EU membership perspective is, nominally, progress for Georgia which was an only an associated country so far. Today, Tbilisi continues its approximation to the EU in the capacity of a potential candidate state (European Commission n.d.). However, a downturn in the quality of democratization and deep political polarization has caused Georgia's failure to get a bigger opportunity - candidate status, thus missing a historic chance to maximize European integration at this stage (De Waal 2022).

It is notable, that the government initially refused to submit an application along with Ukraine (Zakaliani 2022), but public pressure forced Georgian Dream to make the bid on 3 March 2022. However, due to the failure to demonstrate commitment to depolarization and reforms, Georgia did not receive the candidate status from the European Council (European Commission 2022a). This failure of the government attracted fierce criticism from the opposition, civil society, experts (Civil.ge 2022i; OSGF 2022a; Kakachia 2022). It also led to a large several-day public demonstration (RFE/RL 2022).

Furthermore, by not receiving candidate status, Georgia fell significantly behind the two other countries on its path towards European integration (Kakachia & Lebanidze 2022) and this gap, if not eliminated soon, poses a risk to Georgia's participation in the Trio format. Last year, when evaluating the external governance index, the initiation of an associated Trio with Ukraine and Moldova to further deepen the process of EU integration was assessed as a positive step. However, this year, not only has progress not been observed in this direction, but breaking with the other two countries has been assessed as a setback. During 2022, the EU published at least three important documents on Georgia: (1) the EU-Georgia Association Agenda for 2021-2027 (EUR-Lex 2022), (2) the European Commission's opinion on granting Georgia candidate status and the 12 recommendations it gave as conditions for granting that status (European Commission 2022a), and (3) the annual report on the implementation of the Association Agreement (European Commission 2022c). All three documents stress the progress of the country towards European integration, but all three emphasize a serious decline in democratic indicators in the country, especially in terms of political environment, human rights, judicial and electoral system reform.

In this context, the Georgian Dream party and government officials have intensified their confrontational rhetoric against Brussels. On the one hand, ruling party members have attacked MEPs and the former EU Ambassador with conspiracy theories, accusing them of protecting "criminals" (meaning the former and current leaders of the United National Movement) (ქართული ოცნება 2022a), also of attempts to drag Georgia into the war as a condition of granting candidate status (ქართული ოცნება 2022b).

In contrast, at the official level, the Georgian government paid several important visits to Brussels, participated in Ministerial and held high-level meetings (Civil.ge 2022f). The work of the EU-Georgia association council and the parliamentary committees continue in Brus-

sels and Tbilisi, following which the working group of MEPs have highlighted shortcomings that the country faces on its path to European integration (Kaljurand 2022).

All in all, the expert assessment of Georgian progress in EU integration decreased by 7.5 points and totaled 30 in 2022, while governance was evaluated as “more ineffective than effective.” Despite nominal progress, regression in political and democratic reforms has continued and political relations between Brussels and Tbilisi have become strained. Consequently, governance in this area may be assessed as more negative than positive.

## Relations with the USA

2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Georgia and its key strategic partner, the USA. On 25 March, in a statement marking the date, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili said that “the relationship between the two countries is as strong as ever” (საქართველოს მთავრობა 2022). Important bilateral official visits were carried out, such as meetings by a Georgian delegation in Washington and the visits of Assistant Secretary of State Karen Donfried and Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs Bonnie Jenkins to Tbilisi (US Embassy Tbilisi 2022b; US Department of State 2022). During the current year, from the perspective of formal relations, a key change was the appointment of the former Foreign Minister Davit Zalkaliani as Ambassador to Washington (MFA of Georgia 2022).

For Georgia there are two notable documents adopted in Washington. An important document on Georgia was a bipartisan Georgia Support Act approved by the U.S. House of Representatives (Congress 2022). However, despite the distinctly supportive attitude of the document, the financing of FMF and IMET programs will be decreased for Georgia in 2023, while in terms of a bilateral free trade agreement, the Georgian government has not achieved any breakthrough. Also, in early October 2022, a new security strategy was published by the Biden Administration, which says that the USA supports Georgia’s European integration (The White House 2022).

Traditionally, relations between the two countries in the field of defense can be assessed as positive. At the beginning of the year, Georgia received a new batch of Javelins from the USA. In May, the Bilateral Concept the Defense and Deterrence Enhancement Initiative between the two countries was renewed and a concrete plan of bilateral cooperation devised within its framework. In September 2022, Georgia received 11.5 million USD of defense assistance (US Embassy Tbilisi 2022c).

In contrast to the aforementioned, the image of Georgia as a success story of democratization has been tarnished in Washington. This can be seen in the repeated criticism by Ambassador Kelly Degnan of the reforms implemented by the government and of democratic processes (US Embassy Tbilisi 2022a; House of Foreign Affairs Committee 2022) and, also, in various reports and official statements from Washington. In response, the ruling Geor-

gian Dream, like with the EU, periodically confronts the US Ambassador and accuses her of “conspiracies against the state” (Civil.ge 2022j). This rhetoric is often from party rather than government officials and the prime minister has even said that “it is not in Georgia’s interests to criticize America” (Civil.ge 2022o). However, antagonistic attitudes are apparent in the rhetoric of the political party, to which Washington responded accordingly. According to the State Department spokesperson, Washington fully trusts and supports Ambassador Degnan, a sentiment that was also confirmed by the Assistant Secretary of State visiting Tbilisi (US Department of State 2022).

All in all, the expert panel’s assessment of relations with the USA experienced a most drastic decrease of 15 points on the 2021 score, to a new low of 22.5. Formally, the partnership between the two countries continues, especially in the field of defense. However, considering serious setbacks in democratization, Georgia often receives criticism from Washington, which, over time, leads to the cooling of the relationship due to belligerent responses from the government.

## Approximation to NATO

In 2022, the open-door policy for countries willing to join NATO was clearly confirmed in Brussels after Vladimir Putin demanded binding guarantees of security. NATO, along with the USA, unequivocally expressed its position in a letter to Putin that Russia’s so-called informal veto will not prevent countries like Ukraine and Georgia from integrating into the North Atlantic alliance (NYT 2022). The war has heralded a historic confrontation between Russia and NATO that is unprecedented since the break-up of the Soviet Union. The balance of power is now arguably shifting in the region as a result.

Georgia, in terms of formal cooperation, has continued its approximation to NATO in 2022. This year was marked by intensive bilateral visits of various levels both to Brussels and Tbilisi. Since the start of the war in Ukraine, the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Intelligence and Security (Parliament.ge 2022c), the delegation of NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2022), and the NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus (GPB 2022a) have visited Tbilisi. Furthermore, Georgia participated in meetings of defense ministers in February, June and October and a meeting of foreign ministers. For its part, the invitation of Georgia to the NATO summit in Madrid was an important event, which was a decisive political gathering after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine when the Alliance sought to devise a new strategy. Therefore, the invitation of Georgia to the summit was a crucial message that the offer of deepened integration and firm support by NATO of Georgia are not going to change. The adoption of a Georgia-adjusted document of assistance by NATO (NATO 2022a) can be assessed as a positive achievement in the area of NATO integration.

Cooperation continues in the field of military/defense interoperability initiatives too. In this regard it should be highlighted the importance of a NATO defense committee meeting

and a NATO-Georgia Exercise in 2022 (NATO 2022c). In terms of practical cooperation, a positive development was the NATO institutional accreditation obtained by the Defence Institution Building School, operating since 2016 within the framework of the Substantial NATO-Georgia Package (NATO 2022b). This means an advancement in interoperability in the area of training and education.

In the area of NATO integration, the country has, however, moved backwards rather than progressed in terms of the political dimension of integration. After his visit, NATO Special Representative for the Caucasus, Javier Colomina, said that the indicators of Georgia's progress on reforms "are not the ones NATO wants to see" (Civil.ge 2022e). Furthermore, in geopolitical terms, NATO's priorities and strategic objectives have been changing with a stronger focus on the eastern borders of the Alliance, the security of the Black Sea, and increased interest towards the northern enlargement of the Alliance. Such changes in NATO's strategic interests, caused by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, may be a favorable opportunity for further integration and increased interoperability with the Alliance. As such the score on NATO integration has been slightly downgraded and for 2022 it is 32.5 out of maximum 100 points.

## Response to External Challenges

In terms of external challenges, two main events should be singled out which directly affected and continue to affect Georgia: increasing threats coming from Russia in the context of the war with Ukraine, and several episodes of military confrontation between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the civilized world has finally acknowledged that Putin's Russia is driven by ambitions to invade. The European Council recognized Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism. In this setting, risks emanating from the Kremlin increase for Georgia as Russia is the primary source of threat. There are fears that even if Russia is ultimately defeated in the war with Ukraine, Georgia will still remain a zone of risk because Moscow views it as Russia's backyard (Kakachia & Kakabadze 2022). Georgia is also heavily dependent on the Russian economy (TI.ge 2022e). At the same time, Russian military forces are based illegally in the territory of Georgia. Consequently, it is not difficult for Putin to put into operation, if need be, all the levers it holds against Georgia. Facing this external threat, the approach of the government of Georgia is one of "normalization," with the government avoiding overly irritating the Kremlin, a development that Moscow has even commended Georgia for (Civil.ge 2022b).

The Georgian government has carried out several important bilateral and multilateral negotiations with, and visits to Western countries. Among them was a visit of Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili to the UK, visits of the Polish prime minister and Swedish defence minister to Tbilisi and a stepping-up of relations with the Black Sea littoral countries of Bulgaria and Romania. A strategic agreement with Romania was signed by the President

of Georgia (President of Georgia 2022). Participation in Ramstein meetings in September and October were also important (GPB 2022b), especially considering the fact that the first meeting was held without Georgia, which caused dissatisfaction and criticism towards the government inside the country (ჩიჩუა 2022). On the other hand, given the increasing security risks, the government of Georgia has not achieved any significant progress in strengthening strategic alliances or defense cooperation that would have enabled Georgia to firmly secure a place under the Western security umbrella.

The Georgian government's response to the exacerbation of conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan has been assessed as positive. Georgia sticks to its traditional neutral position, supporting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and attempting to perform the role of a mediator. During 2022, a notable intensification of visits of various levels to both countries has been observed. At the same time, a significant achievement of Tbilisi is that the foreign ministers of the two warring countries held a meeting in Tbilisi, which is historical progress (Civil.ge 2022k) and it may be said that the Georgian side had a decisive role in that. In terms of infrastructural projects, the opening of a bridge in Sadakhlo between Georgia and Armenia is a step forward. Georgia's intensification of infrastructural projects is a strategy that may increase the economic and political potential of South Caucasus countries. However, experts have argued that Georgia needs to be even more active when it comes to playing a role in regulating relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia (სამხარაძე 2022; ბრატვილი 2022).

The assessment of governance effectiveness in relation to response to external challenges was not changed this year and stands at 32.5 points. Despite the steps forward made by the entities responsible for foreign policy, these steps are not sufficient in the complex and quickly changing geopolitical environment and, as such, Georgia needs to take more robust steps to deal with those challenges.

## Security Governance

In the area of external security, governance effectiveness is assessed through a few key dimensions: the situation in the occupied territories, the raising of defense capability, and the strengthening of internal security.

With regard to the occupied territories, the risks have increased since the recognition of independence and subsequent annexation of four regions of Ukraine by Russia. Before the annexations, there were talks about holding a referendum in South Ossetia on the issue of joining Russia. Naturally, this was condemned by Tbilisi and the international community. In the end, in April, the scheduled referendum was annulled by the newly-elected leader of South Ossetia, Alan Gagloyev, as a result of consultations with the Kremlin. In parallel, the process of so-called borderization has continued as has the practice of abducting citizens of Georgia from territories along the occupational line. The government usually manages to release them with assistance from international partners, but any fundamental improve-

ment in this direction has not been achieved.

Concerningly for Tbilisi, in August, a visit to Abkhazia by the Syrian foreign minister (which recognizes Abkhaz independence) was followed by a visit by Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenka (whose government ostensibly supports Georgian territorial integrity). This visit triggered speculation about Lukashenka recognizing the independence of the occupied territories as a result of pressure from Putin. The response to this event from Tbilisi was the summoning of the ambassador of Belarus for explanations. But the government did not undertake any other measure against Belarus, although a demand for the recall of the ambassador and a tougher response did gain force among civil society (ზაქარეიშვილი 2022).

In terms of internal security, a risk emerged for Georgia in 2022 in the form of a mass inflow of Russian citizens. The first wave came after the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and a second wave came after Putin announced a partial mobilization. In this regard, experts see a risk of hybrid war, internal civil subversions, and unrest (Kakachia & Kandelaki 2022). Some opposition parties demand the introduction of a visa regime with Russia (Jam-news 2022b; OSGF 2022b). Consequently, governance in this direction is assessed largely negatively.

In terms of defense governance, Georgia continues to host or participate in international exercises designed to help the country converge with Western standards. It is important that Georgia actively continues regular training with the US armed forces, both in Georgia and Europe. This year saw a multinational regular military exercise Noble Partner as well as the US-led Trojan Footprint 2022 with the participation of 30 European countries, in which Georgia participated for the second year running. Also, a training of special operations forces has been held in partnership with the US. In September 2022, Georgia received a 11.5 million USD in defense assistance, though external defense funding was cut by 10 million USD this year (US Embassy Georgia 2022).

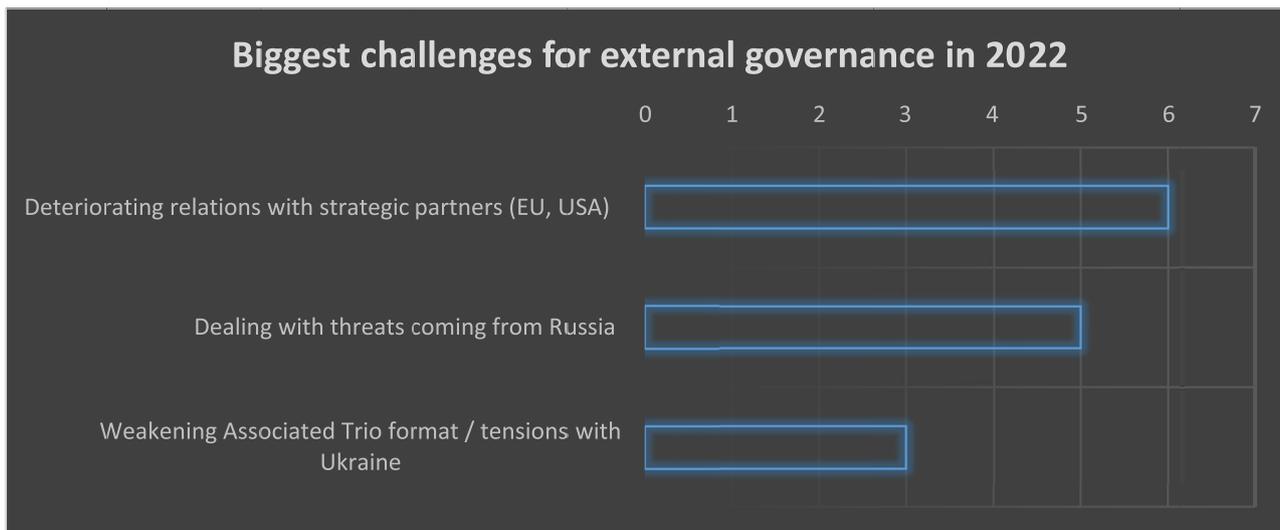
The war in Ukraine has shown that Georgia is far from the standard of defense capabilities that would be commensurate to the threat posed by Russia's geopolitical and military ambitions. The increase in the defense budget in 2023 should be assessed as a positive step forward since this might be connected with possible reforms and an expansion of a Total Defense strategy.

## Summary

In sum, as in the previous year, the Georgian government's effectiveness in external governance has been significantly impeded by internal democratic factors such as polarization, weak reforms and problems in terms of human rights, all of which were reflected in the EU recommendations. According to the expert panel's assessment, the key challenges of the country are deteriorating relations with the USA, non-optimal governance in terms of

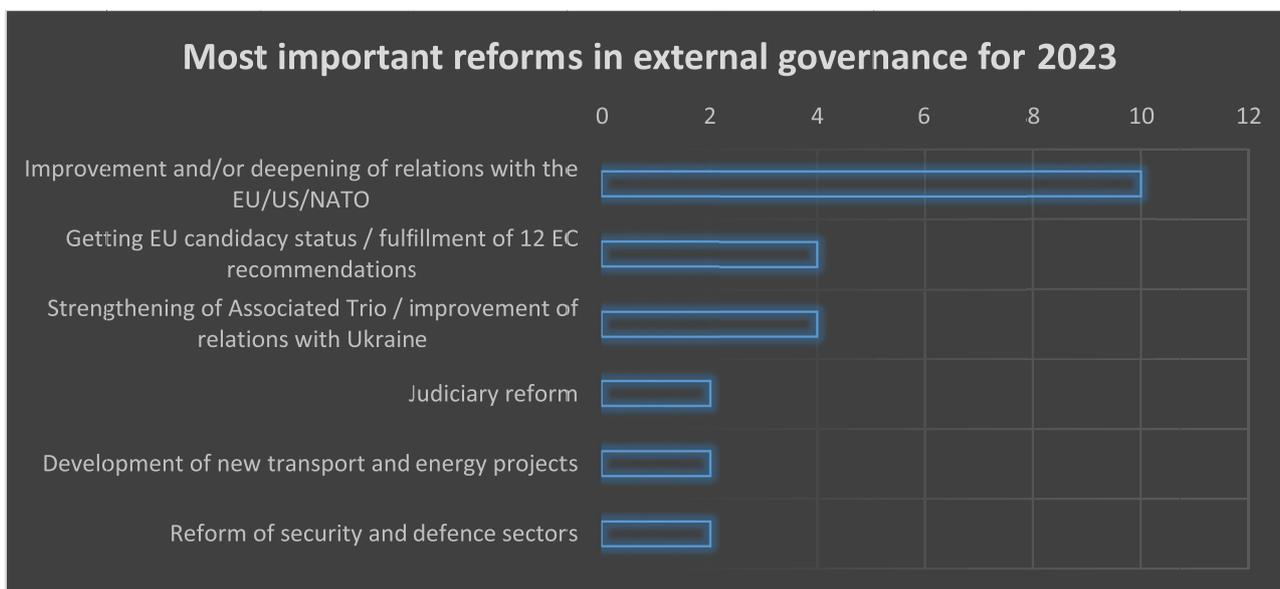
dealing with threats coming from Russia, the weakening of the Associate Trio format, and tensions with Ukraine (figure 13). On the other hand, relatively positive assessments were given to the acknowledgement by the EU of Georgia's long term EU membership prospects, and to the submission of its application for candidate status, involvement in the mediation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as strengthening country's energy and transit role.

*Figure 13: Please, name the three largest challenges related to foreign and security policy in 2022 in Georgia (Figure presents the responses named at least 2 times)*



Necessary steps to be taken in 2023 for the strengthening of the external dimension of governance, according to the experts include improving and deepening relations with the West (USA, NATO and EU), strengthening the format of Associate Trio, improving relations with Ukraine, and reforming the security and defense sector (figure 14).

*Figure 14: Please, name the three most important reforms or ideas related to foreign and security policy in 2022 in Georgia (Figure presents the responses named at least 2 times)*



To sum up, in terms of external governance, the Georgian government has performed poorly in terms of relations with the USA and its positioning on the Russia-Ukraine war, which was reflected in the quantitative survey of experts. At the same time, nominal progress in Georgia's Euro-integration process did occur as Georgia was granted a possible path to EU membership. But failing to receive candidate status is a setback. Georgia continues to converge with NATO standards, but the political environment negatively affects this dimension of approximation. In terms of security governance, important advances regarding the occupied territories were not observed. Despite an increase in the defense budget, increasing challenges to Georgia's sovereignty and security environment remain.

## Conclusion

For the second year in a row, the Georgia Governance Index (GGI) provides a comprehensive assessment of Georgia's performance in four broad governance categories (democratic, effective, social and economic, and external). The GGI Expert Survey graded Georgia's performance in each governance category while the narrative part of the analysis provided detailed analytical context to the expert responses. This is also the first time the report has included a comparative component - comparing the expert assessment figures between 2021 and 2022.

The report described Georgia's difficult path towards multiple transformations. The 2022 report displays both continuity and change with the first report. Continuity is visible in the parts relating to domestic challenges: Georgia's performance in democratic governance remains the worst with the lowest assessment in the GGI Expert Survey, mostly due to the very low scores received in the subcategories related to the justice system. Accordingly, as in 2021, judicial reform was identified as a priority for 2022.

On the other hand, major changes exist in Georgia's foreign and security policy stemming from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Georgia's seemingly suboptimal reaction to its implications. As a result, Georgia's external governance score declined significantly, and foreign policy issues now comprise a major component of Georgia's challenging outlook for 2023. Challenges include the need to restore and deepen relations with Ukraine and Western partners, the need to react in a more efficient way to Russia-related risks and finally the imperative of implementing the 12 EU recommendations to obtain candidacy status without further delay.

## Index Indicators and Sub-indicators

### Democratic Governance

- **Civil and political rights.** Civil and political rights include rights to protection from discrimination on grounds such as sex, race, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age, political affiliation, ethnicity, social class, religion, and disability, and rights to the freedom of thought, speech, religion, press, assembly and movement.
- **Electoral regime.** The state of electoral legislation and electoral reforms, degree of autonomy and impartiality of the Central Election Commission, the quality of elections, presence of an even playing field between government and opposition parties, instances of violence and intimidation.
- **Horizontal accountability.** Horizontal accountability refers to horizontal separation of powers, the effectiveness of the parliamentary oversight over the executive bodies as well as independence, transparency, and effectiveness of judiciary.
- **Civil Society.** Autonomous polity area consisting of self-organizing groups and movements, non-governmental organizations, civic activists, various epistemic communities and grassroot movements. Strong civil society strengthens democracy, applies societal control on state authorities, promotes societal inclusion and political and social accountability, protects civil and the political rights of individual citizens and various societal groups.

### Effective Governance

- **Monopoly on the use of legitimate force.** The state's monopoly on the use of legitimate force and capacity to adopt and enforce political decisions throughout the entire territory of the country within its internationally recognized borders. The state's monopoly on the use of legitimate force may be limited over a period of time, on a particular territory of the country, in a certain area of policy, towards a particular social group or a particular segment of population.
- **Informal governance and alternative form of legitimacy.** Influence of private actors on the government and political decisions of the government even when decision makers formally act in the context of democratic institutions.
- **Control of corruption.** The capacity of the government to implement effective preventive and proactive measures against bureaucratic corruption (illegal use or misap-

appropriation of state property and other state resources by lower- and mid-level public officials for material gains, also personal wellbeing) and political corruption (abuse of power by political decision makers or their close circle in all the three branches of government for illegal personal or partisan aims).

- **Public Services and Competition.** Public service is the service that is provided primarily by public institutions both on central and municipal levels. As for the competition, here is meant the new competition system that was enacted after starting the implementation of the Public Administration Reform in Georgia, according to which the procedures of civil servant selection have changed.

## Socio-Economic Governance

- **Economic framework and labor market.** This topic addresses the existence of a government's general strategy to support the future-oriented development of its economy through regulatory policy. The questions look at how successful economic policy has been in providing a reliable economic framework and in fostering the country's competitiveness. Labor market addresses a government's strategies to reconcile the following objectives: unemployment reduction and job security, and balancing supply and demand on the labor market by providing sufficient mobility of the labor force according to the needs of potential employers.
- **Tax and budget policy.** Effective tax policy realizes goals of revenue generation, growth promotion and the provision of sufficient financial resources for the country to fulfil its given tasks and obligations also in the long run. Sustainable budgeting should enable a government to pay its financial obligations (solvency), sustain economic growth, meet future obligations with existing tax burdens (stable taxes) and pay current obligations without shifting the cost to future generations (inter-generational fairness).
- **Social Policy.** Social policies designed to enhance sustainability involve maintaining or increasing individuals' opportunities to act and live in accordance with their own values, which thereby ensures a high degree of participation in society. The aim here is to examine domestic policymaking as well as the extent to which governments actively contribute to the provision of public goods in the area of social inclusion, health, families and inequalities.
- **Social care and healthcare.** Social care refers to provision of fair, targeted and effective assistance to people by developing a regulated system of social assistance via special financial and non-financial social packages. Healthcare refers to a set of measures aimed at improving public health, disease prevention and disease control. It also refers to the maintenance of health through diagnostics, treatments as well as cure of illness, injury, disease. Apart from this, this includes services that the state provides in emergency situations, like a pandemic, for citizens. For instance, the

immunization process, diagnostics and treatment and operations which are free of charge.

## External Governance

- **European integration.** Approximation of legislative and political environment with the EU standards; the process of institutional and economic integration
- **Advancing relations with NATO and the USA.** Deepening of strategic relations in military, economic and political areas; meeting standards of interoperability with NATO and political standards
- **Responsiveness to external regional and global changes.** Adjustment to security, political and economic environment having changed as a result of external events of various scales, which are related to the Georgian state; update and practical adaptation of relevant strategies
- **Security governance.** Is related to effective management of key security risks and threats, such as relations with Russia, occupied territories, great power competition, cyber warfare, terrorism etc.

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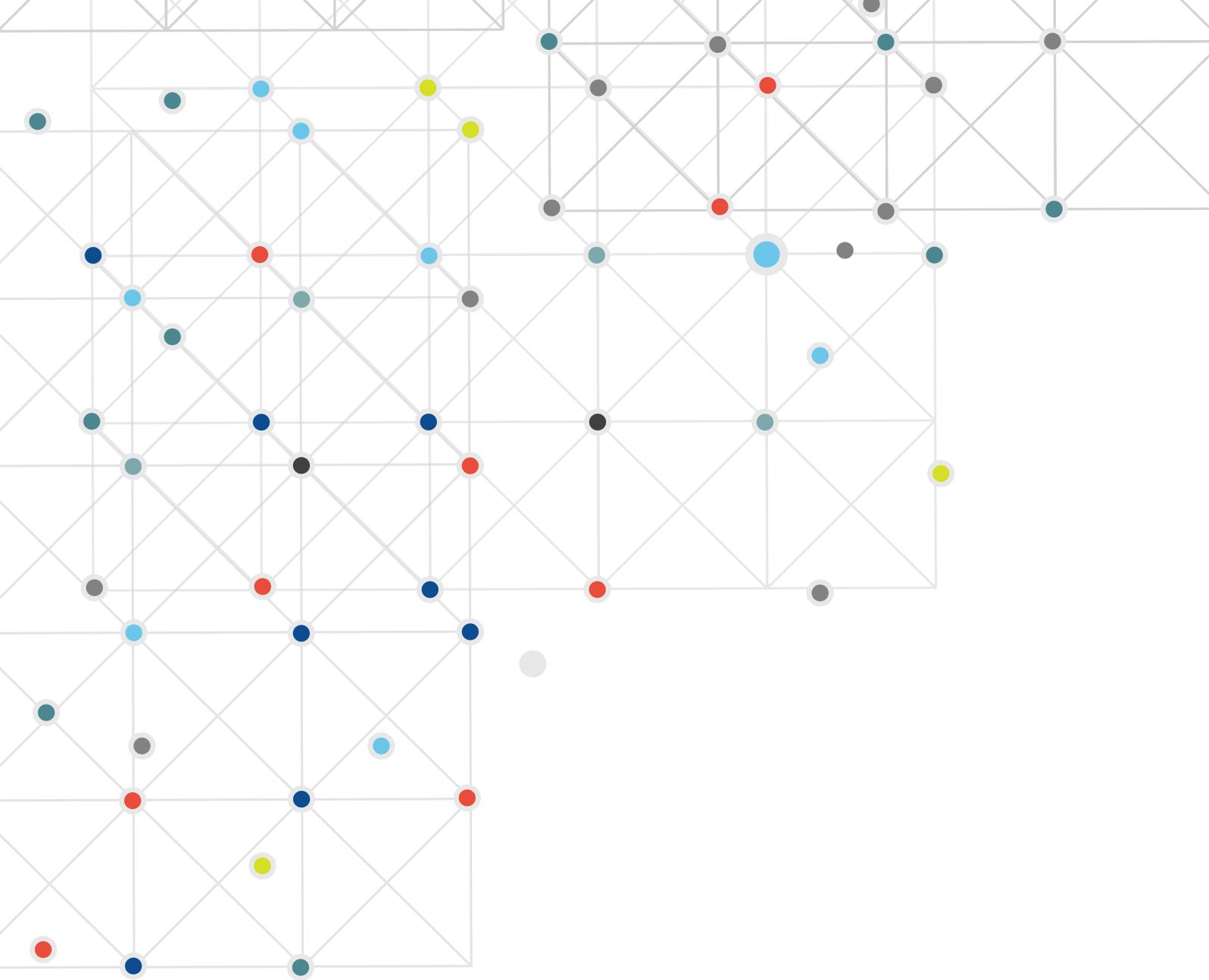
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