

Implementing the EU-Georgia Association Agreement

Four years after the EU-Georgia Association Agreement (AA) was signed in 2014 and two years after its entry into force, the European Parliament is evaluating the level of implementation of the AA and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) has given a positive assessment, but has also encouraged Georgia to address a number of shortcomings, in areas such as labour standards, environmental protection and discrimination against vulnerable groups and women. Parliament will debate the issue at its November I plenary.

Background

Georgia signed its AA with the EU in 2014. This included a [DCFTA](#) entering in force in 2016 and a [visa-free regime](#) for Georgian citizens as of 28 March 2017. These steps mark Georgia's commitment to reform and closer cooperation with the EU, its number one economic partner and key international partner. In order to assess implementation of the AA, AFET commissioned three expert studies: on [electoral reform](#), on the [level of implementation of the AA](#) and on the [institutional framework](#) for implementation. The EPRS has also published an [implementation assessment](#) of the AAs with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

The report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

The AFET committee [report](#) paints a positive picture of the implementation of the AA with Georgia. It welcomes the reforms in line with the AA, praises the cross-party consensus on the European agenda and reiterates the European Parliament's call for an 'Eastern Partnership+' (EaP+) policy to unlock additional perspectives. In the field of the AA's institutional framework, the report calls for greater involvement of the prime minister and minister of foreign affairs in providing high-level political oversight. It also welcomes the adoption of a three-year implementation plan, the establishment of the Inter-parliamentary Assembly of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and the opening of the EaP School in Tbilisi. In the field of political dialogue, the report reiterates that constitutional reforms in Georgia are in line with the overall positive assessment of the [Venice Commission](#), calls on the authorities to pursue a reform agenda aimed at the political neutrality of state institutions and their staff, and welcomes the effective implementation of the visa-free regime for Georgian citizens. While noting with regret that parts of the country have been illegally occupied by the Russian Federation for 10 years, the report supports Georgia in its pursuit of a policy of peaceful resolution. It urges the Georgian authorities to make further efforts to extend the benefits of the AA/ DCFTA to the population of the occupied territories. Regarding the rule of law, good governance and media freedom, the report commends Georgia for its efforts in combatting corruption, especially low- and mid-level corruption, while acknowledging that high-level corruption remains a serious issue. The AFET committee is deeply concerned by the pressure exerted by Turkey on Turkish residents in Georgia as well as on educational institutions on account of their alleged affiliation to the [Gülen movement](#). The report takes note of ongoing judicial reforms but refers to the Venice Commission's recommendations in this field. In the field of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the reports calls on Georgia to do more to protect the freedoms of vulnerable groups such as LGTBQI and Roma people, and recommends boosting protection for children's rights, including prevention of violence. In addition, the report welcomes the progress on approximation with the EU in trade-related areas and welcomes Georgia's membership of the Energy Community.

Report: [2017/2282\(INI\)](#); Committee responsible: AFET; Rapporteur: Andrejs Mamikins (S&D; Latvia).

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PE 628.306– November 2018



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