



ბანკოთმარჯობისა და დემოკრატიის ცენტრი

STATEMENT

Georgian parliament rejects constitutional amendments on proportional electoral system

15 November, 2019 Year

An unfortunate and disappointing decision was made by the Parliament of Georgia on 14th of November, 2019. The consensus of the public, professional and political spectrum was not taken into consideration. The Parliament rejected the constitutional amendment to hold proportional parliamentary elections in 2020 with zero electoral threshold. Consequently, the arguments and positions of a number of majoritarian Members of the Parliament - that has been the primary cause of the present condition- by our assessment, were unconvincing, irresponsible and devoid of any analysis of the political risks. Considering the fact, that historic decision was taken in 2017 and current constitution already provides transition to a proportional electoral system from 2024. Additionally, the draft law was signed/initiated by the majority of the same MPs who eventually did not support the draft. It is noteworthy that the final version of the draft of the constitutional law submitted for consideration has been reached through consultation with the public. In addition, recommendations provided by the civil society were also taken into the account. Since June of 2019, Center for Development and Democracy (CDD) was actively involved in the working group of the electoral legislation reform. We developed a set of recommendations that were reflected in the joint recommendations provided by several NGOs. Our recommendations were also ultimately fully or partially incorporated into the draft legislative amendments. Among them, one of the recommendations regarding the fair distribution of mandates were shared in the final draft of a constitutional law that, unfortunately, was rejected by the Parliament today. The Parliament missed the opportunity to make a truly historic and of utmost importance decision, that would proportionally reflect the political interests of all, including minor groups in the legislature body. The opportunity that would lead to strengthening and promoting the higher standard of democracy in the country. It is unfortunate, that in an already polarized environment, the action taken by the Parliament has triggered the public confrontation. It is important that all stakeholders and the whole political spectrum, especially the ruling party, find a consensus for a peaceful resolution of the current situation through constructive dialogue. Nevertheless, we hope that the processes will be proceeded according to the law. It crucial that all stakeholders realize their responsibility for the peaceful, stable and democratic development of Georgia.