



**PERMANENT DELEGATION OF NORWAY
TO THE OSCE**

STATEMENT ON THE ELECTIONS IN GEORGIA

Delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Permanent Council
Vienna, 26 November 2020

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Ambassador Tsikhelashvili, thank you for reporting back to the council on this.

Norway commends Georgia's efforts to organise elections in a transparent way during a challenging pandemic situation. We support the conclusions in the preliminary joint statement from ODIHR and the parliamentary assemblies of the OSCE, Council of Europe and NATO on the first round of the parliamentary elections held in Georgia on 31 October and look forward to the OSCE/ODIHR final report.

We regret the opposition parties' decision to boycott the second round of elections and the parliament. Georgia needs a functioning parliament and, not least, a functioning parliamentary opposition. This is especially important in a time when the country is facing serious challenges due to the pandemic. We call on all political parties to find common ground and to enable the new and more diverse parliament to play its full role in Georgia's democracy.

Shortcomings in the electoral process identified by local and international observers must be addressed, and the responsible authorities must swiftly investigate all allegations in an impartial and transparent manner, and resolve them in accordance with the law in a timely way. The identified shortcomings show that there is a need for further efforts to consolidate democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

We would also like to commend Georgian authorities and ODIHR with the efforts to implement an election observation mission, in spite of the pandemic.

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Norway will continue to stay closely engaged, and we remain steadfast in our support for Georgia's democracy and European path.

Thank you