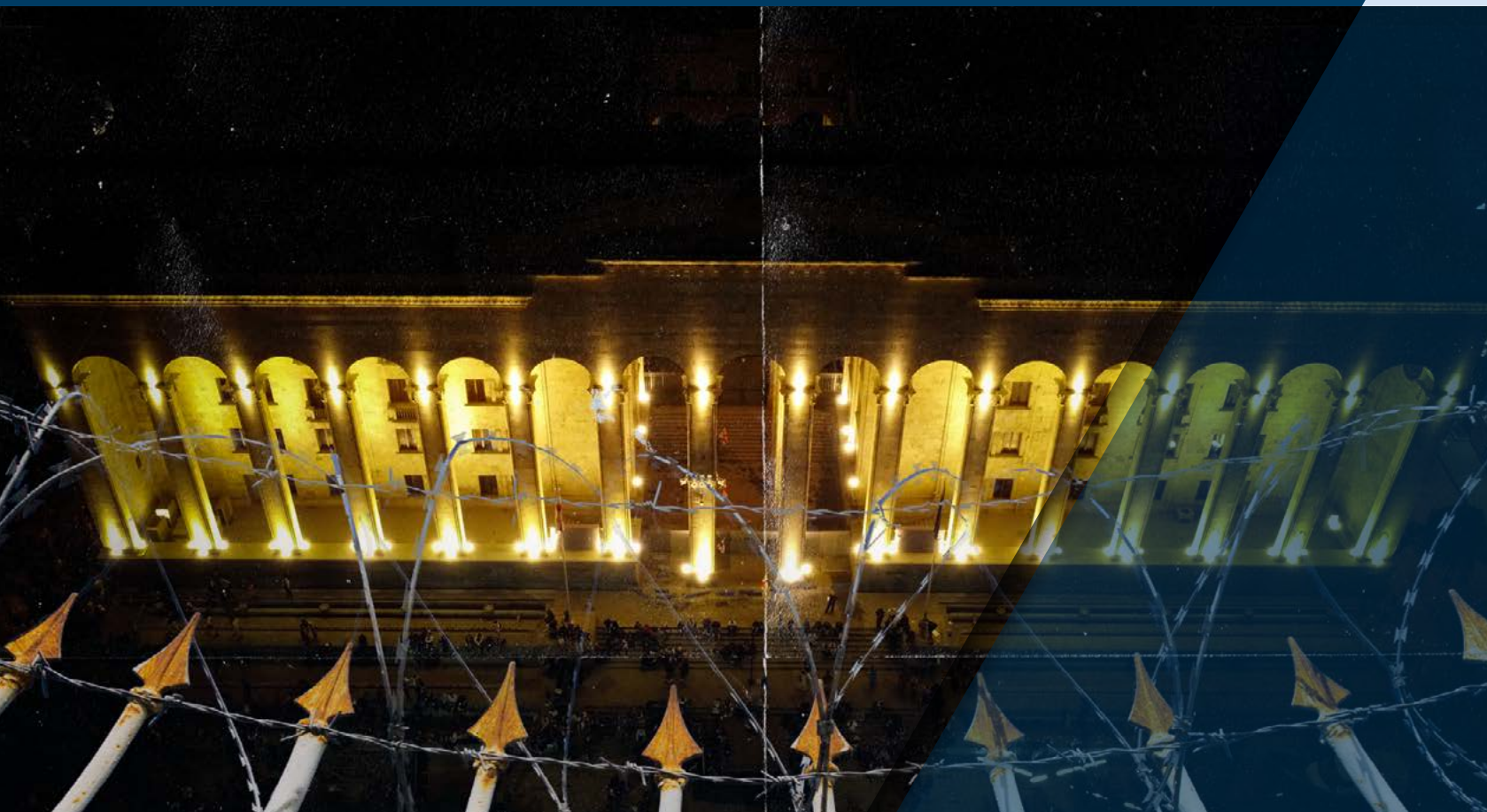




PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT 2023

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In 2023, the Parliament became a closed institution. It transformed into an even more [inaccessible and non-transparent](#) institution for representatives of civil society and critical media. The denial of access to enter the Parliament and attend committee sessions was made without providing specific justification, citing only the general security regulations of the Parliament. The Parliament has ceased the release of public information that could potentially be used as grounds for criticism against MPs. In response to our request for public information, the Parliament did not provide us with the information it has routinely provided for the last 10 years (e.g. the count of speeches delivered by MPs and details on disciplinary actions taken against the). One year before the parliamentary elections, a time when openness of the Parliament becomes even more crucial and accessibility to information about MPs' activities should be heightened, the Chairperson of the Parliament approved a new media accreditation rule, restricting journalists' ability to cover parliamentary proceedings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The 2023 assessment of the 10th Convocation Parliament's performance relies on an analysis of data gathered by Transparency International Georgia's parliamentary office, information sourced from the official Parliament website, and statistical data shared with our organization by the Parliament.

The report presents information about the legislative initiatives undertaken by the Parliament, along with an examination of the mechanisms of parliamentary oversight that are frequently utilized by parliamentary entities.

CHAPTER 1. KEY FINDINGS

Granting the status of candidacy of the European Union to Georgia marked a pivotal event for the country in 2023. The role of the Parliament is crucial on the path of European integration.

Further improvement of the implementation of parliamentary oversight notably of the security services is one of the steps [defined](#) by the European Commission as a condition for granting the status of a candidate country to Georgia.

Some of the nine conditions defined for Georgia continue the 12 recommendations issued by the European Commission in June 2022, while some are completely new.

The long-awaited oral report communicated today to the EU Ambassadors in Brussels by the European Commission on the implementation by Georgia of the EU's 12 conditions for candidacy reportedly [says](#) that Georgia fully implemented three out of twelve conditions fully (related to gender equality, ECHR judgments, and Public Defender's appointment).

At this critical juncture for the nation, the transparency and openness of the representative body deteriorated. The Parliament fails to address polarization and grant adequate oversight roles to the opposition, thereby neglecting to bolster its functional capacity. The majority obstructs the opposition from utilizing parliamentary oversight mechanisms through artificial barriers. Parliamentary oversight is weak, particularly over the security sector.

Statistical data

- **12** ministerial hours and **6** interpellations were held in 2023;
- Accountable persons were summoned to the committee sittings **6** times (in 5 cases the initiator was the opposition, in 1 case the committee). The accountable person attended the session **5** times;
- The deliberation period extensions were utilized in a total of **111** times for **73** legislative packages (**245** bills)
- The number of parliamentary questions decreased, **47** MPs sent a total of **2,997** questions to ministers and accountable persons, of which **77** were from the majority MPs, and **2,920** were from the opposition.¹ Opposition MP *Tinatin Bokuchava* sent the most questions (582 questions).
- **3** requests for the establishment of a temporary investigative commission were lodged in the parliament, all of which were initiated by the opposition. However, in none of these instances was the investigative commission formed.

1 In 2022, 52 members of the Parliament posed 5093 questions.

The activity of Members of the Parliament

- A total of **1,836,033.17 GEL** was allocated for overseas business trips of the **98** members of Parliament.
- The highest number of bills (*105 bills*) from the majority was initiated by Irma Zavrashvili, and from the opposition by Aleksandre Rakviashvili (*74 bills*);
- *Cezar Chocheli* from the opposition missed plenary sessions the most times (**23** absences) and from the majority *Eliso Bolkvadze* (**13** absences)
- *Giorgi Godabrelidze* from the opposition missed plenary sessions the most times without valid reasons (**16** absences) and from the majority *Mariam Lashkhi* (**10** absences)

Important Legislative Amendments

Among the laws regarded as progressive are the following: new legislation regarding personal data protection and an amendment to the anti-corruption law, which mandates prosecutors to disclose asset declarations. The extension of gender quotas for parliamentary and local self-government elections.²

The following legislative changes are negatively evaluated: an initiative for a preliminary prohibition on temporary constructions during gatherings and demonstrations, modifications to broadcasting regulations concerning the management of hate speech, and amendments to accountability and oversight provisions in the Rules of Procedure.

Major challenges

- The **openness and transparency** of the Parliament drastically deteriorated in 2023.
- **Parliamentary oversight deteriorated due to amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament**, where it is no longer mandatory for the majority to review the reports of the accountable body during plenary sessions.
- **Oversight over the security sector remains weak.** The Trust Group still operates without being fully manned.
- A **temporary investigative commission** has not been established in the Parliament. The majority is actively obstructing the formation of such a commission through artificial barriers. It is worth noting that the draft resolution for establishing a temporary investigative commission to probe corruption and other illicit activities within the judicial system was not voted on, as the majority MPs did not register before the session. As MPs [stated](#) this was an “act of solidarity” with, sanctioned judges;
- **Ministers and other accountable persons did not respond promptly and fully to MP’s questions, especially when the author was an opposition MP.** A total of 791 unanswered parliamentary questions were submitted by the opposition, constituting 27% of their overall inquiries. Conversely, only 5 questions posed by the majority remained unanswered, representing a mere 6% of their total questions.
- Despite the adoption of the Code of Ethics, the establishment of the Ethics Council has been delayed until now, **resulting in the inability to enforce the provisions outlined in the Code of Ethics.**
- The consideration of bills on the fast track remains a challenge.³ The Parliament adopted 122 laws in an expedited manner.⁴
- Despite frequent ethical violations by MPs, the Ethics Commission still does not function;
- **The discussion of the legislative proposal is merely pro forma;**

² The Parliament abolished gender quotas, 04.04.24, <https://bit.ly/3QTy1sP>

³ In 2022, the Parliaments passed 125 bills in expedited manner.

⁴ A total of 125 draft laws were requested to be approved in an accelerated manner, 2 of them were rejected, and one draft was withdrawn by the initiator.

Recommendations

Georgia was granted the status of candidacy of the European Union in 2023. Further improvement of parliamentary oversight notably of the security services is one of the steps [defined](#) by the European Commission as a condition for granting the status of a candidate country to Georgia.

The full implementation of these recommendations is crucial for Georgia to avoid hindering European integration and to open accession talks with the European Union. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that the legislative body in the parliamentary republic effectively exercises oversight.

Parliament should actively utilize all available mechanisms to fulfill its legally assigned functions. It should focus on important national issues through both the legislative process and parliamentary oversight, specifically:

Parliamentary Oversight

The following steps should be [taken](#) to enhance effective parliamentary oversight over the security sector:

- **Parliamentary oversight of the security sector should be enhanced.** For comprehensive parliamentary control of the State Security Service, a specialized parliamentary body (committee, sub-committee, or trust group with an expanded mandate) should be established exclusively dedicated to overseeing the security sector. The Parliament's mandate and authority for overseeing the security sector should be enhanced. The independent expert council should be created within the specialized body.
- **Parliamentary oversight should be fully enacted**, with proper assurances of supervision outlined in the Parliament's Rules of Procedure. Specifically, full participation of the opposition should be guaranteed. Activity reports submitted by independent bodies to the parliament should be mandatorily reviewed during plenary sessions; The majority should not obstruct the opposition's use of oversight mechanisms through artificial barriers;
- When appointing heads of bodies accountable to Parliament, it should be mandatory to consult with opposition factions to prevent politicized decisions. The rule of decision-making through agreement with them should be explicitly enshrined in the Rules of Procedure;
- Accountable bodies and government members should fully support Parliament in implementing effective oversight. They should conscientiously and responsibly adhere to the procedures of parliamentary control as outlined in the Constitution and the Rules of Procedure. This includes promptly answering questions from MPs and attending sessions.

Legislative Process

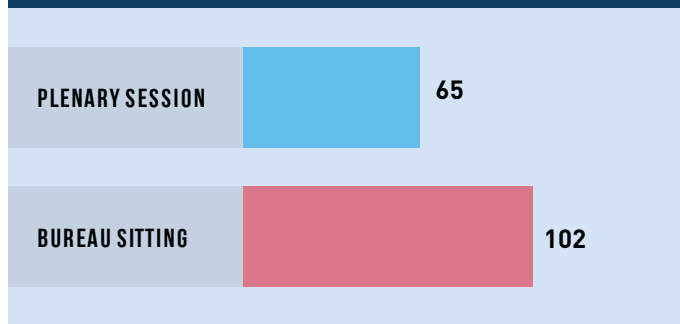
- The legislative process concerning significant national matters should occur amidst extensive discussions and expert involvement. MPs should consider public opinion throughout this process, and the potential impact of regulations should be carefully assessed during significant legislative changes.
- Bills should only be expedited or prolonged in their deliberation in exceptional cases;
- Legislative proposals should not become a pro forma tool for civic engagement. The Parliament should review legislative proposals promptly and allow the authors to present their opinions to the committee.

Openness and Transparency

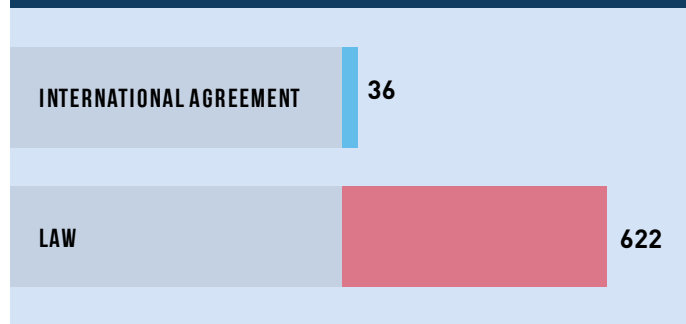
- The Parliament should encourage the involvement of civil society and the media in its activities and avoid creating artificial barriers.
- The Parliament should ensure the involvement of civil society and the media in its activities and refrain from obstructing their participation through legislative changes or violations of existing rules;
- The Parliament should release public information within designated timeframes and in accordance with the law, thereby ensuring transparency and accountability of the legislative body. Access to the Parliament should not be unreasonably restricted for media and civil society representatives.
- In order to implement the Code of Ethics, it is essential for the parliament to expeditiously appoint members of the Ethics Council. In recent years, both verbal and physical confrontations between MPs have become more frequent, with no effective mechanisms in place to address them properly.

CHAPTER 2. GENERAL STATISTICS

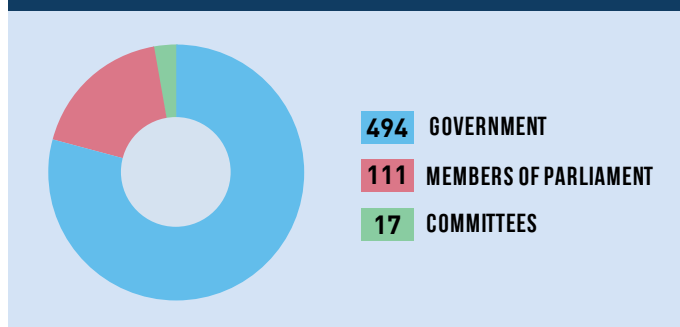
NUMBER OF SESSIONS HELD



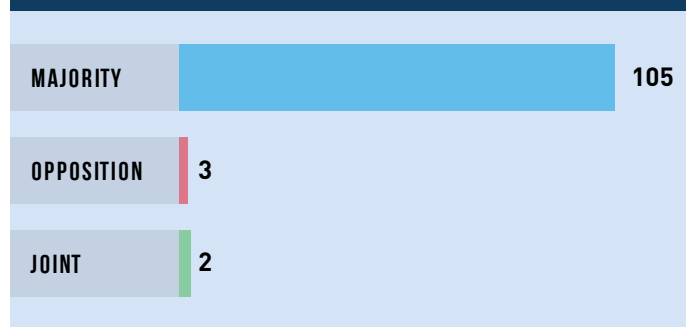
PARLIAMENT ADOPTED



NUMBER AND INITIATORS OF THE ADOPTED LAWS



ADOPTED LAW INITIATED BY MPS



Boycott

- “United National Movement - United Opposition “Strength is in unity” parliamentary faction did not attend the February 7-10 and March 21-24 plenary sessions;
- Parliamentary political group “Lelo – Partnership for Georgia” did not attend the June 14, 15 and 16 plenary sessions.
- As for the members of the parliament, during the reporting period Grigol Vashadze, Giorgi Vashadze and Paata Manjgaladze did not attend the February 7-10 and March 21-24 plenary sessions and Tamar Kordzaia and Tamar Charkviani did not attend the February 7-10 plenary sessions.

Justified remarks of the President (veto)

- The Parliament overrode two vetoes of the President.
- One veto remains to be reviewed.

CHAPTER 3. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

• Russian Law - an Attempt to Derail from the EU Path

In February 2023, members of the parliamentary majority from Georgian Dream's offshoot "People's Power" introduced two draft laws to the Parliament: "On the transparency of foreign influence" and "On the registration of foreign agents," which received support from the Chairperson of the Parliament and other majority members. The attempt to adopt the Russian law was aimed not only at restricting civil society organizations and critical media but also at affecting the population of Georgia. This initiative was harshly [criticized](#) by numerous local and international organizations and experts. After the adoption of a similar law in Russia, numerous organizations refused to comply, resulting in their closure. Those who persisted faced escalating levels of control, harassment, and repression.

The discussion of the draft laws sparked considerable tension in society. The protests persisted from March 2 to March 8. Meanwhile, amid the noise and protests, committee discussions were also underway. On March 2, during the joint committee session, there was a physical altercation between the majority and opposition MPs. Similarly, the Legal Issues Committee session on March 6 also began with another physical confrontation. Amidst intense public protests, the majority unexpectedly and hastily pushed through the initiative in the first reading, garnering [support](#) from 76 MPs. This further escalated the tension, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs deployed the Special Task Force to the rally. The Special Task Force employed tear gas and water cannons against protesters. Several protesters were arrested. After the large-scale protest on March 7-8, the ruling party decided to withdraw the bills. During the plenary session on March 10, the majority dropped the bill during its second reading. The second initiative was withdrawn.

• The Process of Implementing a 12-Point Plan and the Candidacy Status

On November 8, the European Commission recommended that Georgia be granted the status of a candidate country to Georgia. However, the European Commission made this decision upon understanding Georgia would [take steps](#) to address 9 priorities. On December 14, Georgia was **granted the status of a candidate country** for EU membership.

Some of the 9 steps stem from the 12 priorities issued by the European Commission on June 12, while others are entirely new, particularly, the fight against disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference against the EU and its values. Additionally, the European Commission underscored that Georgia's alignment with the EU's common foreign and security policy should be improved.

Fulfillment of the European Commission's 12-Point Plan ⁵
3 Priorities were completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidate efforts to enhance gender equality and fight violence against women;• Adopt legislation so that Georgian courts proactively take into account European Court of Human Rights judgments in their deliberations.• Appointing a Public Defender through a transparent process.
Some progress was achieved in 7 areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resolve political polarization;• Ensure the involvement of civil society in decision-making processes;• Ensure full functioning of the State institutions and to further improve the electoral framework resolving shortcomings identified by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Council of Europe/Venice Commission;• Strengthen the Anti-Corruption Agency;• Strengthen the protection of human rights of vulnerable groups;• Adopt and implement the transparent and effective judicial reform strategy;• Strengthen the fight against organized crime
Limited Progress - Deoligarchization
No Progress
Undertake stronger efforts to guarantee a free, professional, pluralistic and independent media environment

5 This evaluation period also includes the 2022 results.

The Venice Commission prepared an opinion regarding **de-oligarchization** and common courts bills drafted by the majority in response to the EU priorities. According to the Venice Commission's March 13, 2023 opinion, the government should achieve the goal of de-oligarchization not through a single special law, but by strengthening state institutions and implementing comprehensive sectoral reforms. Ultimately, the majority rejected the de-oligarchization draft law, [stating](#) that the issue would be addressed according to the government's action plan.

On October 9, the Venice Commission submitted a critical opinion concerning the Organic Law on **Common Courts** of Georgia which assesses both the legislative amendments made in June 2023 and the draft amendments proposed in September 2023. Unfortunately, the latter only became available to the public after the Commission's report was published. The majority of the recommendations from the Venice Commission echo the fundamental challenges within the justice system that civil society has identified and urged the Georgian authorities to take respective measures over the years.⁶

- **Sanctions Imposed on Judges and “Act of Solidarity” by the Majority**

The U.S. State Department imposed sanctions on influential Georgian judges, members of the so-called clan, Levan Murusidze, Mikheil Chinchaladze, Irakli Shengelia and Valerian Tsertsvadze “due to their involvement in significant corruption”. The opposition demanded the establishment of a temporary investigative commission to examine instances of corruption and legal violations within the judicial system. However, in a show of solidarity with the judges, the majority of MPs [abstained](#) from registering to vote. Although there were enough votes to create the commission, the majority members artificially prevented its formation. As a result, due to a lack of quorum, the vote was not [held](#) three times during the April 20 plenary session.⁷

- **An Attempt to Impeach President**

The President's impeachment initiated by the ruling party, which lasted for almost a month and a half, was an unprecedented event in the history of independent Georgia. It was widely [perceived](#) as a sabotage to the country's European integration.

The ruling party initiated a “punitive” impeachment process, citing Salome Zurbishvili's meetings with the highest-ranking European and EU officials, without the government's consent. The Plenum of the Constitutional Court concluded that the President of Georgia had violated the Constitution. Irakli Kobakhidze and Anri Okhanashvili represented the interests of Parliament in the Constitutional Court. The Parliament [failed](#) to remove President Salome Zurbishvili from office. 86 members of Parliament voted in favor of removing President Zurbishvili, while one opposed it, falling short of the required two-thirds majority (100 MPs) needed for the impeachment to pass.

- **The New Media Accreditation Rule and the Decline in Parliamentary Openness**

In recent years, the 10th Convocation of Parliament has been actively pursuing a policy that increasingly renders the institution [closed and non-transparent](#). In 2023, the situation regarding media access and transparency further deteriorated. The revised media accreditation regulations were introduced, further solidifying the Parliament's status as a closed and less transparent institution, especially for critical media representatives. This development has a detrimental effect on the quality of information available to the public and poses a threat to the country's democratic progress. In a parliamentary republic, the transparency and openness of the parliament stand as the foundational pillars of the country's democratization. The Parliament should encourage public participation in parliamentary affairs.

Per the order of the Chairperson of the Parliament, visitors are restricted from engaging with journalists in the area designated for the briefing for Members of Parliament as well as from carrying demonstration signs and posters into the Parliament. This represents a significant violation of the fundamental right to freedom of expression. Political expression should be protected to the highest standard.

Under the [new rules](#), the entry procedures to the Parliament are becoming increasingly restrictive with a new requirement to document the intended purpose of entry. This restriction lacks justification since limitations should only be imposed for security reasons. Unless there is a clear threat to security, citizens should enjoy the freedom to attend committee meetings and open events held in the Parliament.

6 The Coalition Reacts to Another Facade Draft Law Initiated by Georgian Dream and to the Venice Commission's Opinion, 16 October 2023, <https://bit.ly/3Vau15Y>, Coalition for an Independent and Transparent Judiciary Reacts to the Venice Commission Opinion <https://bit.ly/4bKTWDS>

7 There was no quorum for voting on the draft resolution regarding the establishment of a temporary investigative commission to examine corruption and other illicit activities within the judicial system. 18 April 2023, <https://bit.ly/3IKQ89f>

It is also important to note that the Parliamentary Standing Council of Open Government, which is primarily responsible for ensuring the Parliament’s openness and transparency, is not adequately addressing the current challenges.

• **Election of the Public Defender and the Members of the High Council of Justice**

Amidst the March protests, after rejecting candidates for the ombudsman supported by the civil sector, Parliament [elected](#) Levan Ioseliani, an MP from the “Citizens” party, as the **public defender**. Non-governmental organizations [criticized](#) the election process of the public defender, noting that it was conducted without public involvement and participation. This approach was inconsistent with the 12th recommendation of the European Union, violated the “Paris Principles” adopted by the United Nations, and failed to inspire public trust.

Since June 2021, the Council has been functioning without five non-judge members. The European Commission’s recommendations for candidate status also emphasized the need to elect independent and qualified non-judge members to the High Council of Justice, alongside carrying out comprehensive reforms of the Council.⁸ On May 17, 2023, the Parliament [elected](#) non-judge members to **the High Council of Justice**, with support from some opposition MPs.

The Coalition for Independent and Transparent Justice publicly [endorsed](#) five candidates nominated by individual non-governmental organizations and higher educational institutions within the coalition. However, the Parliament did not endorse any of these candidates. The candidates who did receive parliamentary support [lacked](#) the genuine political will to improve the court system and the vision for fundamental reforms.

CHAPTER 4. IMPORTANT LAWS

4.1 PROGRESSIVE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

• **New Law on Personal Data Protection**

The Parliament adopted a new law on Personal Data Protection, initially proposed in 2019. Deliberations on the law resumed in the Parliament of the 10th Convocation in December 2022. The key provisions of the new law include: commercial messages will no longer be sent without prior consent, all public institutions and certain private companies will be required to appoint a personal data protection office, etc.	The law aligns with the best international standards and GDPR principles and will be implemented gradually.
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• **Amendment to the Law of Georgia on Fight against Corruption mandating Prosecutors to submit asset declarations**

At the government’s initiative , the list of officials required to submit asset declarations has been expanded. This includes individuals holding the status of prosecutors, liaison prosecutors, and assistant liaison prosecutors in Eurojust, as well as heads of departments within the Prosecutor’s Office of Georgia who were not previously included.	<p>The system of submitting asset declarations serves as a crucial tool in the fight against corruption. Consequently, the expansion of the list of officials subject to this requirement should be viewed positively.</p> <p>It is important that the scope of officials subject to asset declaration requirements expands further. Transparency International Georgia has submitted a legislative proposal on this matter to the Parliament.</p>
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8 See further details: Who are the new non-judge members of the High Council of Justice, and what are their connections, 24 May 2023 <https://bit.ly/4bQoQun>

- **Cancellation of non-electronic IDs (amendments to the Election Code)**

Starting from July 1, 2024, so-called laminated IDs issued before July 28, 2011, which are either valid for life or for 20 years, will be cancelled . The new ID card issued to the owner in exchange will contain the same identification data as the so-called laminated ID card	In addition to implementing electronic voting, it is crucial to transition from non-electronic to electronic IDs.
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- **Extension of gender quotas for parliamentary and local self-government elections until 2032**

The Parliament adopted the amendment to the Election Code in an expedited manner. According to the law, the gender quota rule specified in the Election Code will remain in effect for both parliamentary and local self-government elections until 2032. Furthermore, if the mandate of a male MP or municipal council is terminated before the end of his term, his position will be filled by the next candidate on the party list, thereby allowing for the replacement with a female deputy.	<p>The changes in the composition of representative bodies, both in the Parliament of Georgia and municipal councils, will contribute to bolstering the representation of women.</p> <p>The mandatory gender quota, serving as a temporary measure to achieve equality, reflects the best practice established in European countries. Its implementation in Georgia has received positive evaluations from numerous international organizations.⁹</p>
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- **Penalties for individuals who exceed noise regulations.**

The proposal to amend the Code of Administrative Offenses. The amendments aim to raise fines for noise violations. With these legislative changes, the initial warning stage in case of violation is eliminated, and individuals will be fined directly.	The tightening of sanctions for an important issue of a particular segment of the population should be evaluated positively. At the same time, it is crucial to ensure effective enforcement of the law in practice.
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4.2 NEGATIVE LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

- **Prohibition of Erecting Temporary Structures Prior to Assemblies and Demonstrations**

The Parliament approved an initiative on the fast-track tightening regulations on setting up temporary structures, such as tents, during assemblies and demonstrations. With few exceptions, participants are now prohibited from arranging temporary structures during these events.	<p>The presented initiative runs against the freedom of expression. According to assessments by non-governmental organizations, this initiative is poised to drastically curtail the freedoms of assembly and expression guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia and international standards.</p> <p>The President regarded this initiative as an “anti-European law” and vetoed it.</p>
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⁹ The Parliament abolished gender quotas, 04.04.24, <https://bit.ly/3QTy1sP>

• Legislative Amendments on the Regulation of Hate Speech

<p>In an expedited manner, without a broad public discussion, the Parliament deliberated and adopted the amendments submitted by the majority of MPs to the Law on Broadcasting. These amendments entail the migration of hate speech and obscenity from the realm of self-regulation - where media entities autonomously address complaints and devise appropriate responses - to the domain of governmental regulation.</p> <p>The Communications Commission vested with authority to scrutinize instances of hate speech and obscenity issues and impose appropriate sanctions (warnings, fines, license/authorization suspensions).</p>	<p>Considering the prevailing circumstances, marked by the government's adversarial stance towards critical media, non-governmental organizations, and dissenting viewpoints at large, alongside the evident lack of independence and politicization within the Communications Commission, coupled with dwindling confidence in the judicial system, granting the Communications Commission further authority to regulate media and intervene in the content of media productions poses a significant threat to freedom of expression.</p> <p>The legislation falls short of achieving the intended objective for which legal regulation of hate speech and obscenity is permitted in developed democracies. Instead, it may become a punitive tool used against critical media.</p>
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• Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

<p>The Parliament endorsed the initiative of the majority of MPs, according to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The mandate to deliberate on significant reports during plenary sessions was revoked.</i> (e.g. reports of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, Special Investigation Service, Personal Data Protection and Public Information). Reports are now discussed during sitting if explicitly requested by the leading committee, bureau, or faction. • Committee activity reports are no longer deliberated upon during plenary sessions. • The arrangement and sequence of speakers during committee sittings will be determined at the discretion of the committee chairperson and by the majority of those present at the sitting. 	<p>The presented amendments substantially deteriorate parliamentary oversight, transparency, and the legal standing of the opposition.</p> <p>The purpose of considering reports during plenary sessions was not merely to satisfy the interests of MPs, but to inform the public about the activities of vital national agencies and to ensure parliamentary oversight over these entities.</p>
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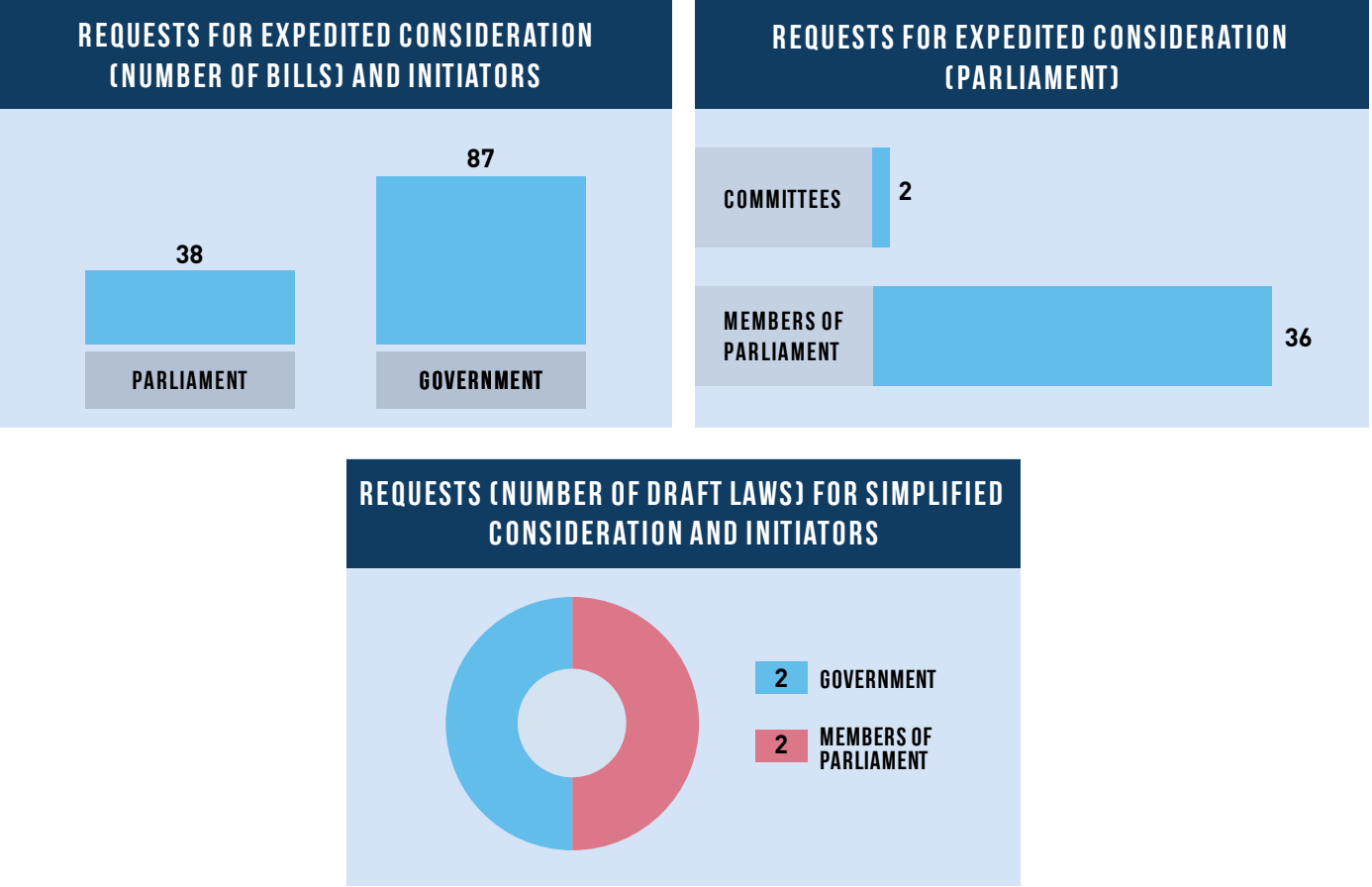
• A Change to the Procedure for Electing the Chairman and Deputies of the CEC, (Transferring this Authority from the President to the Chairperson of the Parliament)

<p>Parliament adopted an initiative whereby candidates for the chairperson and professional members of the CEC will be selected and presented to the parliament by the chairperson of the Parliament, rather than by the President.</p> <p>Additionally, the Parliament will now be able to elect nominated candidates to the position for a full term of five years with a simple majority of the full composition, whereas previously, a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority was required.</p>	<p>These amendments will further erode the independence of the CEC and amplify the ruling party's influence over it. Additionally, these changes fail to address the primary challenge facing the election administration—lack of trust—and contradict the fundamental agreement on how the election administration should be staffed. The amendments also run against the commitments made by the ruling party and the recommendations of both local and international organizations.</p> <p>President vetoed this initiative which was overridden by the Parliament.</p>
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• **Amendment to the Law on Common Courts**

<p>The law redefined the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The requirements for electing a person to the position of a judge of the Supreme Court• Secondment of the judge to another court• Rules on disciplinary action against a judge• The new regulation regarding access to court documents. <p>According to the initiators, this initiative aimed to support Georgia’s bid for EU membership candidate status.</p>	<p>The October 9 opinion of the Venice Commission reiterated the main recommendations that Georgia received in March 2023 and noted that regrettably the majority of these recommendations remain unfulfilled.</p> <p>The law does not address the recommendations of the Venice Commission, including the double two-thirds principle, the selection of chairpersons by the judges of the respective courts, etc.</p> <p>The document emphasizes the critical necessity for a fundamental and comprehensive reform of the High Council of Justice, outlining its specific definition and purpose.</p>
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CHAPTER 5. PROGRESS AND ASSESSMENT OF LEGISLATIVE PROCESS



Prolonging the Deliberation Period for Draft Laws		
Initiator		Number of Cases
Parliament	41 legislative packages (133 draft laws)	66
Government	30 legislative packages (109 draft laws)	39
Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia	2 legislative packages (3 draft laws)	6

In the legislative processes of Parliament, **expedited consideration** should be an exceptional measure. However, longstanding practice reveals that the expedited consideration of draft laws is frequently devoid of substantial justification. The expedited consideration of draft laws deprives interested parties of the opportunity to participate in and monitor the issues outlined by the legislative initiative. While the Rules of Procedure prescribe a standard of substantiation (at the time of initiation, the explanation note must indicate the substantiation of the expedited consideration, and the initiator's written justification is required thereafter) in practice, it has become a mere pro forma requirement. During the reporting period, the Bureau rejected the consideration of a bill in an expedited manner twice. Hence, it underscores the importance of reserving expedited consideration of draft laws for genuinely exceptional circumstances.

According to the Rules of Procedure, it is possible to extend the deadline for consideration of draft laws. In particular, if the preparation for parliamentary deliberation of a draft law cannot be completed within the designated timeframe, the Parliamentary Bureau has the authority to extend the deadline for its consideration as required. The current practice reveals that committees frequently utilize this mechanism, extending the review period up to four times.

CHAPTER 6. PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

6.1 HEARING OF A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GEORGIA AND OTHER OFFICIALS IN THE PARLIAMENT AT PLENARY AND COMMITTEE SESSIONS, AND INTERPELLATION

On June 30, 2023, the Prime Minister presented **a Report on the Implementation of the Government Program**.

The President delivered the annual report to Parliament during the extraordinary session on March 31, 2023.

Ministerial Hour	
Date	Minister
21.02.2023	Minister of Internal Affairs, Vakhtang Gomelauri;
23.03.2023	Minister of Finance, Lasha Khutsishvili;
20.04.2023	Minister of Environment Protection and Agriculture, Otar Shamugia;
18.05.2023	Minister of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection, Zurab Azarashvili;
16.06.2023	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ilia Darchiashvili;
20.09.2023	Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Thea Tsulukiani;
04.10.2023	Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Vice Prime Minister, Levan Davitashvili;
17.10.2023	Minister of Defence, Juansher Burchuladze;
02.11.2023	Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Irakli Karseladze;
17.11.2023	Minister of Justice, Rati Bregadze;
28.11.2023	Minister of Education and Science, Giorgi Amilakhvari;
12.12.2023	State Minister for Reconciliation and Civil Equality, Tea Akhvlediani.

Interpellation¹⁰

Subject	Author of the Question	Addressee
Contrary to the NATO commitments, regarding the non-renewal of documents, the reduction of the defence budget, and the national vision.	At the request of members of the Parliament Teona Akubardia, Khatuna Samnidze, Taniel Nakaidze, Ana Buchukuri, Tamar Kordzaia, Mikheil Daushvili, Beka Liluashvili, Shalva Kereselidze and Armaz Akhvlediani.	Primer Minister Irakli Garibashvili (23.01.2023)
Regarding ongoing projects in the occupied territories and communication with Western partners.	At the request of a group of seven members of the Parliament (Teona Akubardia, Taniel Nakaidze, Ana Natsvlashvili, Giorgi Vashadze, Paata Manjgaladze, Khatuna Samnidze, Davit Bakradze).	Minister of Foreign Affairs Ilia Darchiashvili (07.09.2022)
Regarding the free meals for children in schools.	At the request of the United National Movement - the united opposition "Strength is in unity" faction.	Minister of Education and Science Giorgi Amilakhvari (24.04.2023)
Concerning the proportionality of the use of force during the March 7-8 demonstrations.	At the request of members of the parliament: Khatia Dekanoidze, Roman Gotsiridze, Teona Akubardia, Ana Natsvlashvili, Rostom Chkheidze, Nato Chkheidze, Khatuna Samnidze and Tamar Kordzaia.	Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri (10.04.2023)
Regarding the Anaklia Deepwater Port: Investors, Finances, Timelines, and Disputes.	At the request of members of the Parliament: Roman Gotsiridze, Nato Chkheidze, Rostom Chkheidze, Khatuna Samnidze, Tamar Kordzaia, Teona Akubardia, Khatia Dekanoidze, Davit Usupashvili, Armaz Akhvlediani, Beka Liluashvili, Mikheil Daushvili, Salome Samadashvili and Ana Natsvlashvili.	Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Levan Davitashvili (10.04.2023)
Regarding the commitment to issuing alerts for natural disasters, search and rescue operations, and related equipment.	At the request of the United National Movement - the united opposition "Strength is in unity" faction.	Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri (14.08.2023);
Regarding the decision on strategic partnership with China, recognition of Georgia's sovereignty by China, relations with Russia and multilateralism.	At the request of members of the parliament: Teona Akubardia, Khatuna Samnidze, Taniel Nakaidze, Tamar Kordzaia, Ana Buchukuri, Aleksandre Motserelia, Beka Liluashvili, Mikheil Daushvili and Shalva Kereselidze.	Minister of Foreign Affairs Ilia Darchiashvili (12.09.2023)

In contrast to the previous year, during the reporting period, the mechanism of inviting accountable individuals to the committee was utilized six times by relevant subjects. Of these instances, the opposition initiated it five times, and the committee - once. Accountable individuals attended the committee meetings on five occasions, with one exception: the Minister of Internal Affairs could not attend due to a business trip. As per the agreement with the inquirer, the deputy minister and the department head furnished information on the discussed issue during the committee meeting.

¹⁰ Source: Annual Report of the Parliament of Georgia, p.3, <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/OpenFile/7167>

Summoning Accountable Individuals To The Committee Session				
Initiator	Addressee	Subject	Committee	Result
Foreign Relations Committee	Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development Genadi Arveladze	Georgia's Economic Diplomacy	Foreign Relations Committee	Attended
Parliamentary Political Group Lelo – Partnership for Georgia	Minister of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection (former) Zurab Azarashvili	Topics concerning achondroplasia	Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee	Attended the April 19, 2023 session
Parliamentary political group Eurooptimists	Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure Irakli Karseladze	Regarding the Rikoti Highway	Sector Economy and Economic Policy Committee	The minister attended the committee session on October 30, 2023
Parliamentary political group Eurooptimists	Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Vice Prime Minister Levan Davitashvili	Regarding the participation in the “Belt and Road Initiative” forum in China, attended by the President of the Russian Federation	Sector Economy and Economic Policy Committee	The minister attended the committee session on December 18, 2023
Parliamentary political group - Reform Group	Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri	Specific issues addressed by the “2019-2020 Audit Report on the Management of Assets and State Procurements of the Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs”	Defence and Security Committee	The minister did not attend. ¹¹
Parliamentary political groups: Reform Group and For Georgia	Minister of Defence Juansher Burchuladze (former)	Concerning the announced decision to construct a new civil airport in the Vaziani area	Defence and Security Committee	The minister attended the committee session on October 4, 2023

6.2 QUESTION OF THE PARLIAMENT MEMBER

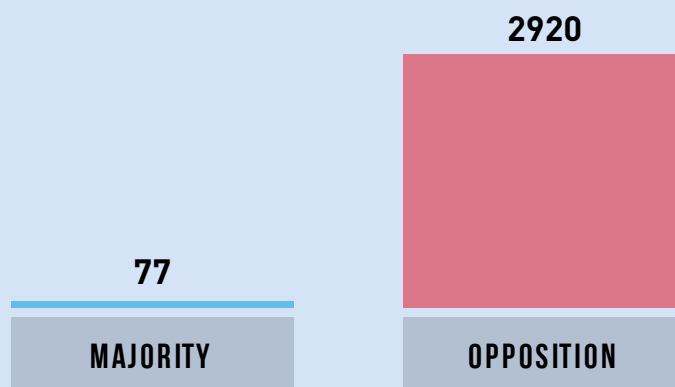
In 2023, **47** members of Parliament submitted a total of **2,997** written questions¹² to ministers and accountable agencies. Of these, **77** were from majority deputies, and **2,920** were from the opposition.

A total of **796** questions remained unanswered, with **791** of these questions posed by the opposition.

¹¹ According to the information provided by the committee and in agreement with the initiator, since the minister was on a business trip, a meeting of the Defense and Security Committee was held on April 28, 2023. During this meeting, the issue was presented by Giorgi Butkhuzi, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, and Nikoloz Sharadze, the Chief of the Border Police of Georgia.

¹² The data is based on information posted on the Parliament of Georgia's website.

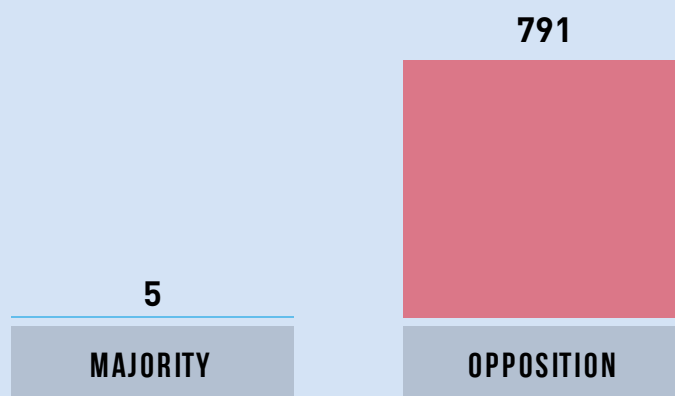
QUESTION OF AN MP



ANSWERS TO THE WRITTEN QUESTIONS



UNANSWERED QUESTIONS WERE POSED BY:



AUTHORS OF PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS (TOP TEN)



Addressees (Top ten)

Addressee	Number of Questions
Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia	86
Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia	54
Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia	48
Prime Minister of Georgia	47
Ministry of Justice of Georgia	45
Ministry of Defence of Georgia	38
Oni Municipality Mayor/City Hall	37
Gori Municipality Mayor/City Hall	35
Shuakhevi Municipality Mayor/City Hall	35
Khulo Municipality Mayor/City Hall	35

While parliamentary questions are frequently utilized by members of parliament, the effectiveness of this mechanism for parliamentary oversight is often compromised. This can be attributed to both the nature of the questions posed and the responses from government members, particularly when the question's author is an opposition member of parliament.

There have been hundreds of cases of government members disregarding questions from MPs, particularly when posed by opposition members. In 2023, 791 questions (27%) from opposition MPs went unanswered. The issue of unanswered questions, as well as delayed responses, is also underscored in the [periodic reports](#) of the Procedural Issues and Rules Committee.

In 2023, parliamentary questions primarily revolved around requests for statistical information on various topics. However, questions with identical content were often submitted in different formats, resulting in a proliferation of similar inquiries.

Deputies and government officials alike must embrace greater responsibility for upholding the constitutional mechanism of parliamentary oversight. Parliamentary questions should serve as a means to genuinely scrutinize government actions. Furthermore, ministers should respond to inquiries regardless of the political affiliation of the question's author. Unanswered questions merit discussion during plenary sessions of Parliament.

6.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TEMPORARY INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION

The establishment of a temporary investigative commission stands as a vital component of parliamentary oversight. The constitution ensures that 50 deputies can form such a commission, providing the opposition with a valuable tool for scrutiny. However, in 2023, the parliamentary majority obstructed the vote on an investigative commission proposed by the opposition. This commission aimed to investigate corruption and other illicit activities within the judicial system. The draft resolution to create the temporary investigative commission failed to proceed to a vote, as the majority of deputies did not register before the session. This was purportedly an “[act of solidarity](#)” with sanctioned judges.

Name	Initiator	Result
On establishing a temporary investigative commission to examine the causes of the natural disasters in Shovi, evaluate the response to them, and assess the legality of actions taken by specific state bodies and officials.	United National Movement - the united opposition “Strength is in unity” faction	The initiator withdrew
In 2020, before the elections of the Parliament of Georgia, there was a proposal for the establishment of a temporary investigative commission within the Parliament of Georgia. Its purpose was to examine the findings of an investigation regarding the transfer of land plots, originally registered by the public registry to individuals, and the subsequent implications of this registration	Parliamentary political group - Girchi	Not created
The formation of a temporary investigative commission within the Parliament of Georgia to investigate transnational crimes perpetrated by organized criminal groups via fraudulent “call centres,” and to assess potential inadequate responses to such activities.	34 members of the opposition	Not created

6.4 TRUST GROUP

Enhancing parliamentary oversight, particularly over security services, is one of the nine conditions set by the European Commission for granting Georgia the status of a candidate country. The [complete fulfilment](#) of these recommendations holds paramount significance for our country. On one hand, it ensures the smooth progression of the European integration process, moving Georgia closer to the opening stage of negotiations for EU membership. On the other hand, it ensures that the legislative body effectively oversees the parliamentary republic.

In 2023, the trust group operated with an incomplete membership.

Performance of the Trust Group

The confidence group of the Parliament comprises **4** members, with a quota of 3 members from the faction within the parliamentary majority and 1 member from the faction within the parliamentary opposition.

The trust group of the Parliament of Georgia convened for a total of 14 sessions.

The following agencies within the defence and security sector provided information to the Parliamentary Trust Group:

- Intelligence Service (February 9, 2023)
- Special State Protection Service (February 14, 2023)
- Ministry of Defense (March 27, 2023)
- State Security Service (April 6, 2023)
- Ministry of Internal Affairs (April 12, 2023)
- Special Penitentiary Service (April 12, 2023)

On April 11, 2023, the Operational-Technical Agency presented its statistical and general report of activities to the trust group.

Chairman of the trust group, Irakli Beraia, along with member Aleksandre Tabatadze, conducted 10 supervisory visits.

The members of the trust group inspected the LEPL Operational-Technical Agency.

6.5 THEMATIC INQUIRY

The thematic inquiry group, as one of the pivotal mechanisms of parliamentary supervision, sees active utilization by committees. However, a key challenge lies in overseeing the implementation of the recommendations formulated by these groups. This information must be systematically published on the Parliament's website.

Committee	Thematic Inquiry
Agrarian Issues Committee	Access to finance in the agrarian sector (private financial institutions' perspective)
Committee on Education, Science and Youth Affairs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identifying the challenges faced by public higher educational institutions in Georgia's regions and developing supportive mechanisms. 2. The impact of infrastructure and human resource conditions in early and preschool education institutions on the quality of education. 3. Evaluating the impact of students' social and emotional well-being on their academic achievements and assessing the effectiveness of existing support mechanisms. 4. The practice of adhering to sanitary and hygienic standards in educational institutions, the role of school doctors, and the existing challenges. 5. Identifying labour market-compatible priorities in professional education and analyzing the financing model. 6. Involving the school community in the management process of the general educational institution.
Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee	Providing education tailored to market demand with a modern agricultural and environmental focus.

Sector Economy and Economic Policy Committee	Concerning the legislative framework for developing innovation-promoting instruments.
Diaspora and Caucasus Affairs Committee	Engaging the Diaspora for Georgia's Development: Attracting Sustainable Diaspora Capital.
Committee on Culture	Inclusion of students with disabilities in public and private art education institutions.
Sports Committee	Policies for Preventing and Addressing Adolescent and Youth Addiction to Lotteries, Gambling, and Gaming: Challenges and Prospects for Resolution.
Healthcare and Social Issues Committee	Access to Mental Health Services and Current Challenges.

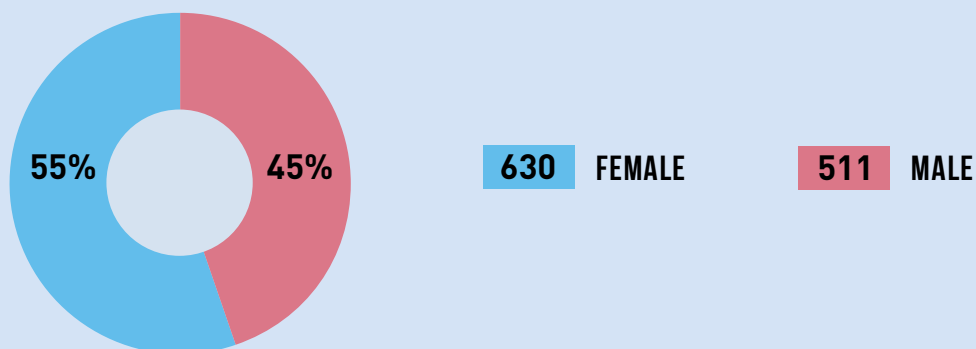
CHAPTER 7: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENTARY ACTIVITIES

During the reporting period, there were 27 female deputies in parliament. Three deputies - Nino Iobashvili, Maia Menagharishvili, and Ketevan Dumbadze - had their terms terminated. The following replacements were made: Ketevan Turazashvili replaced Levan Ioseliani, Salome Kurasbediani took over for Nino Iobashvili, Salome Jinjolava succeeded Maia Menagharishvili, and Ketevan Charkviani replaced Ketevan Dumbadze.

Among the female MPs:

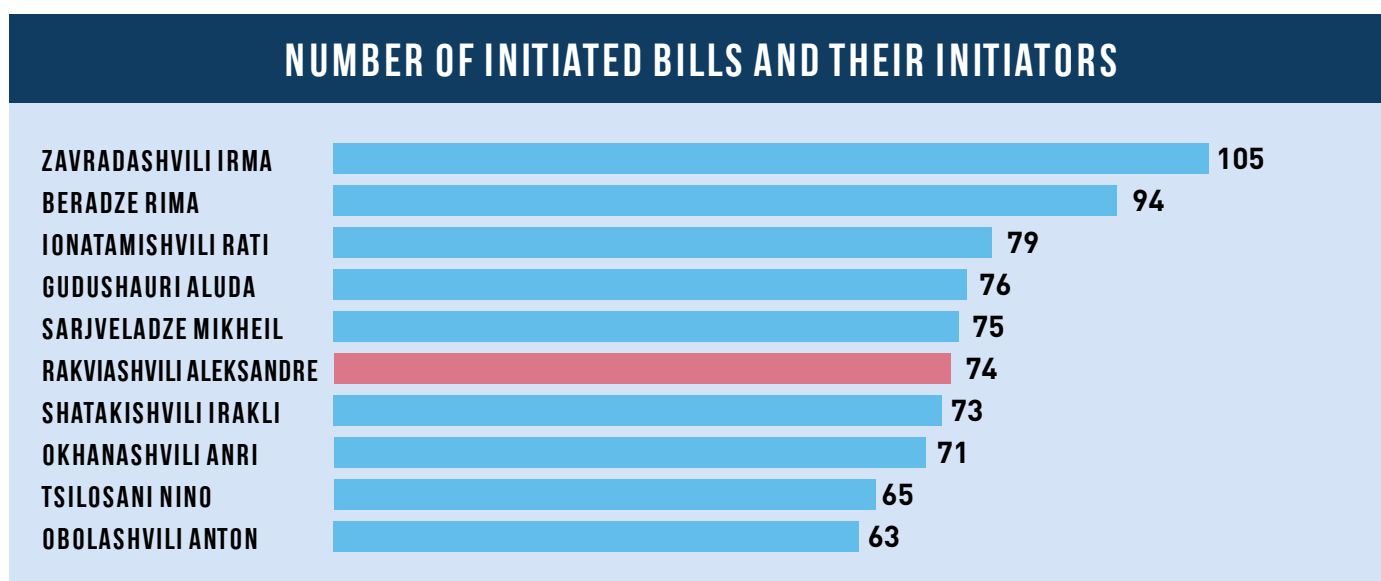
- Nino Tsilosani serves as the Deputy Chairperson of Parliament and the Chairwoman of the Gender Equality Council.
- Maia Bitadze is the Chairperson of the Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Committee.
- Tinatin Bokuchava is the Chairperson of the faction United National Movement - United Opposition "Strength is in Unity".
- Eliso Bolkvadze is the Chairperson of the Culture Committee.
- Maka Bochorishvili is the Chairperson of the European Integration Committee.
- Khatuna Samnidze is the Chairperson of the parliamentary political group "Reforms Group".
- Nato Chkheidze is the Chairperson of the parliamentary political group "Freedom".

DISTRIBUTION OF OFFICIAL POSITIONS IN THE PARLIAMENT OFFICE BY GENDER



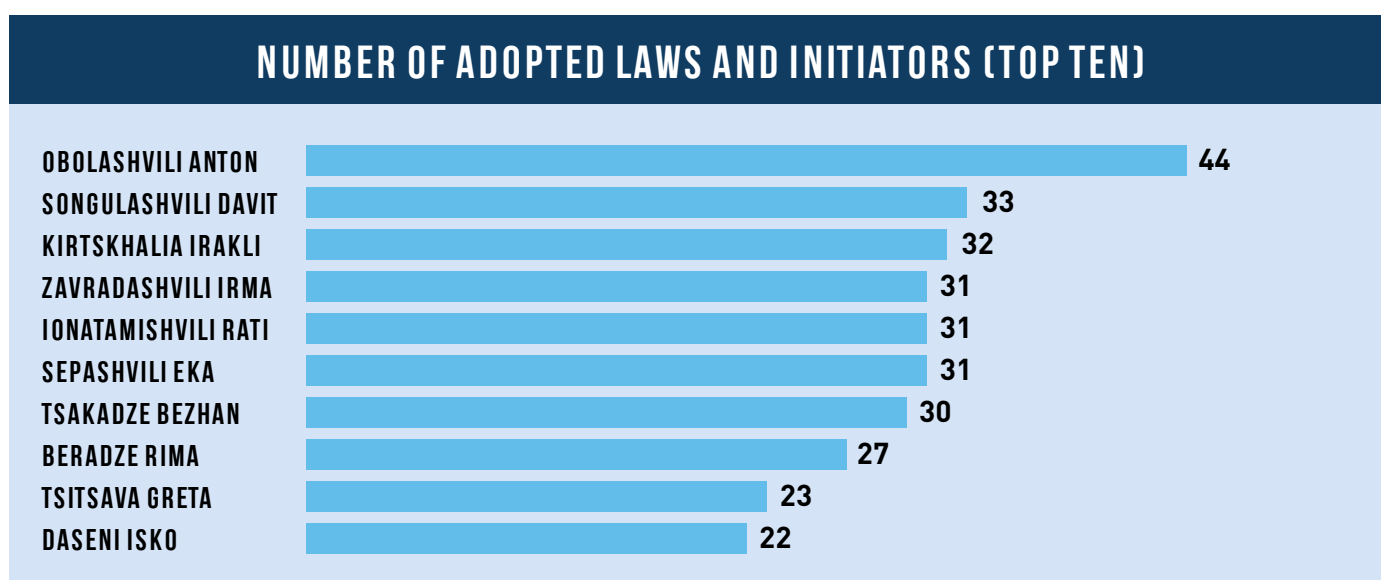
CHAPTER 8: ACTIVITY OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

8.1 NUMBER OF INITIATED BILLS AND THEIR INITIATORS



For more information on the initiatives, please refer to the [table](#).

8.2 NUMBER OF ADOPTED LAWS



For more information on the initiatives, please refer to the [table](#).

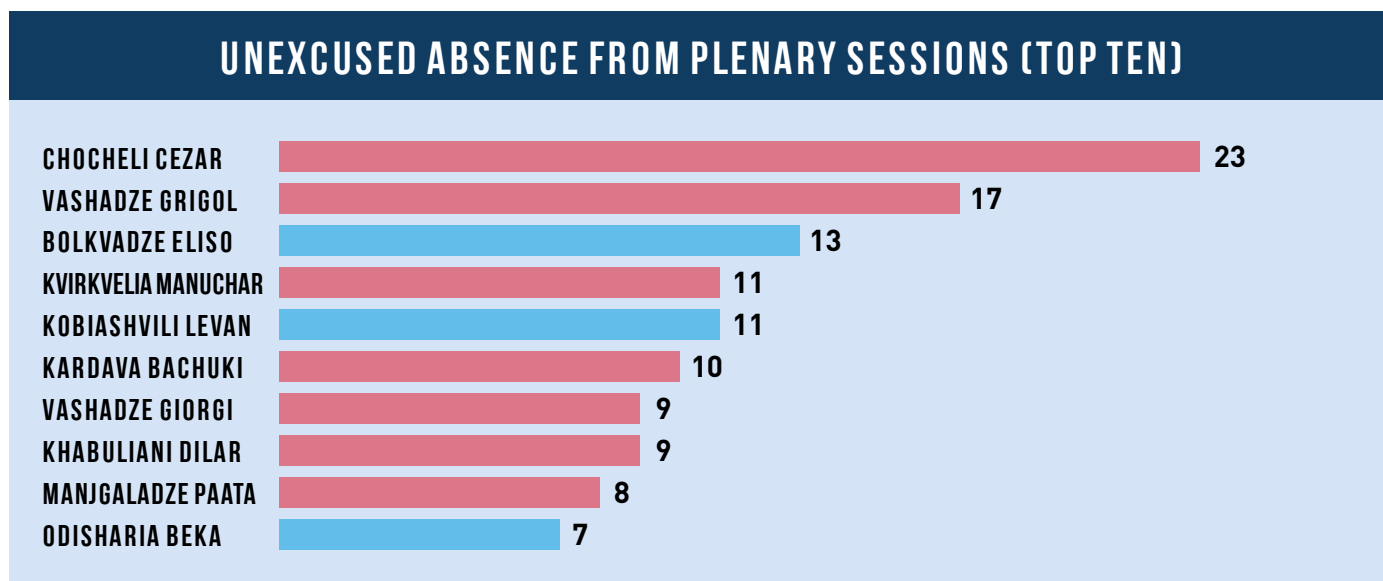
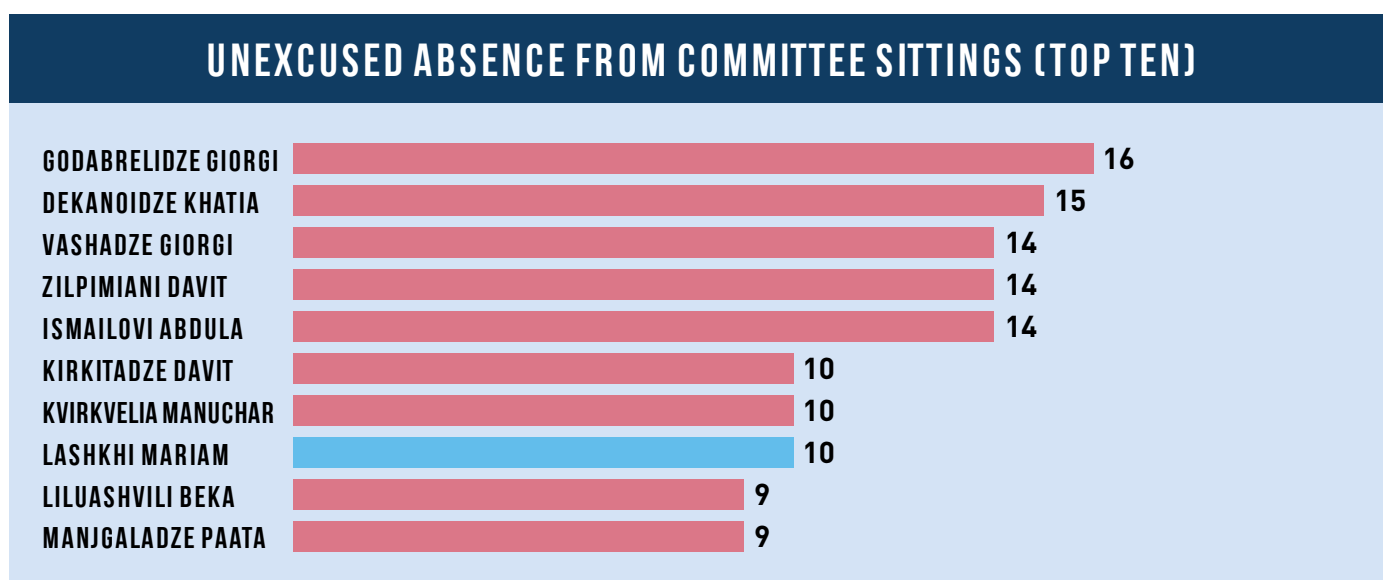
8.4 BUSINESS TRIPS OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT¹³

A total of **98** members of Parliament went on business trips, with expenditures from the state budget amounting to **1,836,033.17** GEL. Please refer to the [table](#) for more detailed information on the MPs' business trips.

¹³ Source: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/OpenFile/7038>

CHAPTER 9: PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN PLENARY AND COMMITTEE SESSIONS, AND DISCIPLINARY RESPONSIBILITY

9.1 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES FROM PLENARY AND COMMITTEE SESSIONS



For more information, please refer to the [table](#).

9.2 DISCIPLINARY RESPONSIBILITY

During the reporting period, members of the Parliament were held accountable for violating the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Georgia in the following instances:

- 5 members of the Parliament had 5% of their salary withheld and were required to leave the session hall.
- 28 members of the Parliament had 10% of their salary withheld for missing committee sittings.
- 10% of the salary was withheld from 39 members of the Parliament due to unexcused absences from plenary sessions.
- Due to failing to register at the plenary session, 5% of the salary was withheld from 20 members of the Parliament.

The Parliament did not disclose which MPs were subjected to these sanctions. Notably, this information was consistently provided by the Parliament in previous years.

CHAPTER 10. ACTIVITIES OF THE PARLIAMENT'S COMMITTEES

Committee	Number of sittings	Draft laws considered	Initiated bills	Citizen applications
Agrarian Issues Committee	22	19	0	65
Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee	29	291	3	2198
Education and Science Committee	35	177	0	407
Environmental Protection and Natural resources Committee	28	85	0	73
Sector Economy and Economic Policy Committee	46	308	0	366
Diaspora and Caucasus Issues Committee	18	18	0	171
Committee on European Integration	23	83	1	50
Defense and Security Committee	24	136	0	64
Legal Issues Committee	38	361	0	1487
Cultural Committee	22	34	0	130
Regional Policy and Self-Government Committee	19	150	0	164
Foreign Relations Committee	18	14	0	50
Procedural Issues and Rules Committee	38	70	0	118
Budget and Finance Committee	32	312	0	62
Sports and Youth Issues Committee	24	69	1	105
Healthcare and Social Issues Committee	25	228	1	864

CHAPTER 11. LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS

In 2023, **142** legislative proposals were submitted to the Parliament of Georgia and subsequently referred to the committees for consideration by the decision of the Parliamentary Bureau. Only the Healthcare and Social Issues Committee established a working group in a single case. **49** negative conclusions were submitted to the Bureau. The legislative proposals were not initiated by the committees. The Parliament did not provide any additional information.

A prevailing practice has emerged in Parliament whereby the authors of legislative proposals are not even notified about the consideration of their proposals.

Transparency International Georgia submitted 3 legislative proposals to the Parliament. Out of these, 2 were considered and not approved, while one remains unreviewed.

- The committee reviewed the legislative proposal "[On Strengthening Parliamentary Oversight over the Security Sector](#)" **yet the issue was not included in the agenda**. The committee ultimately rejected the proposal.
- Legislative proposal for amendments to [the Law of Georgia "On the Fight Against Corruption"](#) remains unreviewed.
- The Parliament rejected the legislative proposal for [amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament](#).