

## EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Head of Division  
Eastern Partnership – Bilateral

DIRECTORATE Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia  
Regional Cooperation & OSCE

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Dear Ms. Inashvili,

The President of the European Commission, Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, has asked me to reply to your letter of 30 May, in which your organization, the Media Union “Obiektivi”, appeals for support of journalist’s rights in Georgia.

I would like to reassure you that the EU places great importance on human rights and strengthening the rule of law in Georgia as part of its overall support to democratic reforms in the country, and it closely monitors any alleged violations thereof.

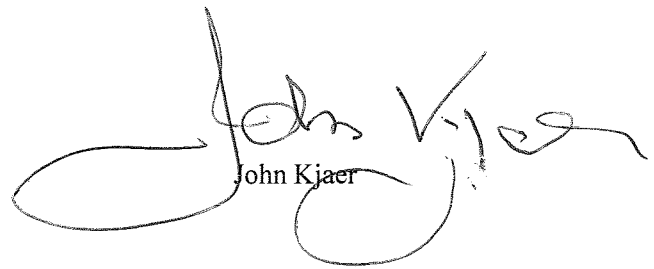
In this context, the EU is seriously concerned about alleged physical assault against journalists and the use of excessive force by law enforcement during the 26 May protest rally dispersion. There needs to be respect for the constitution and the rule of law by all concerned, including when exercising the fundamental freedom of assembly. In this sense, the EU understands the need for the authorities to maintain law and order, but also emphasizes that this needs to be done in a proportionate way. In Georgia, both the opposition and the Government share the responsibility of ensuring that the violence is not used as a means for political ends.

The EU has requested the Government of Georgia to investigate the events of 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May and emphasized the need for transparency and credibility of these investigations. The reports of excessive use of force by law enforcement during rally dispersion, the killings allegedly as a result of excessive use of force by the police, violation of human rights during the detention as well as interference into journalistic reporting must be thoroughly and promptly investigated and perpetrators brought to justice.

The alleged disproportionate use of force by the Georgian law enforcement during the 26 May protest and the treatment of the media were also discussed during the latest EU-Georgia Human Rights dialogue meeting, which took place in Brussels on 20 June. The EU once again called for a prompt, transparent and efficient investigation.

A genuinely pluralistic media landscape, transparency of media ownership and an environment which supports journalists are crucial elements of a truly democratic society. In this sense, we welcome the recent approval of the law on media ownership and the accompanying inclusive legislative consultation process involving the CSOs as an example to be encouraged. The EU will continue to provide support to the Public Defender Office and work together with the government and the civil society organizations in advancing the democratic culture and protection of human rights in Georgia.

Yours sincerely,



John Kjaer

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