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NDI POLL: GEORGIAN CITIZENS REMAIN STEADFAST IN THEIR STATED AIM OF EUROPEAN AND EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

TBILISI – The National Democratic Institute (NDI or the Institute) and CRRG Georgia have released the results of its latest public opinion research in Georgia, indicating Georgian citizens' unwavering support for political (54 percent) and economic (52 percent) cooperation with the European Union (EU). However, the aspirations of the Georgian people come into contrast with a perception that the government is not doing enough to ensure EU membership.

“It’s clear the will of the Georgian public is firmly in the camp of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The consistency of the public support for EU and NATO membership should encourage political and civic leaders to deliver on the settled will of the Georgian people,” - said NDI Georgia country director, Alan Gillam. “The government, parliament and political parties need to work together to actively reconnect with the public on their issues of top concern; jobs, poverty and rising prices, if they are to restore public trust in political institutions. To continue democratic progress, the rebuilding of confidence in political parties around public priorities and not narrow political agendas is paramount.”

The recent poll indicates a concerning trend of low public confidence in institutions. 64 percent of Georgians are saying none of the parties represent their interests. Even among those who identify with a particular party, 14 percent of GD supporters and 36 percent of opposition supporters say none of the parties represent their interests. Skepticism is the highest among the young demographic - only 15 percent say there is at least one party representing their views. Further, Georgians remain skeptical of the parliament’s willingness to address their concerns. Half of the population (49 percent) does not believe parliament is passing legislation on issues that matter to them. Only a third believe that parliament regularly communicates with the public. Lastly, every second Georgian (51 percent) says they don’t trust any of the Georgian TV channels, which is a significant increase from 20 percent in 2019.

The new poll reveals a growing demand for women's political participation, which can be understood as a desire for change in political discourse and agendas. There is an increase (from 48 percent to 56 percent) in the number of people who believe that women and men represent their interests equally, and fewer people (16 percent) say male politicians represent them better than women. Further, more and more people demand 50-50 gender representation in the parliament.

"There is a clear desire from the Georgian public to see more women, not just in politics, but in positions of responsibility within their representative and Government structures. Political parties should see this as an opportunity to increase representation in line with the public desire and continue to progress the advancement of women's political participation," said Alan Gillam.

NDI surveys public opinion to help Georgian stakeholders diagnose and address issues of public concern by providing accurate, unbiased and statistically sound data. This poll aims to capture the most relevant information to foster the development of responsive policies and governance. The new report looks at a nationwide survey conducted between March 17-23, through telephone interviews with a nationwide representative sample of Georgia's adult population, excluding occupied territories. The March poll included 1032 completed interviews. The average margin of error is +/- 2 percent.

NDI's survey work is funded by UK aid from the British people.

This poll was carried out by CRRC Georgia.

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NDI is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-governmental organization that works in partnership around the world to strengthen and safeguard democratic institutions, processes, norms and values to secure a better quality of life for all. NDI envisions a world where democracy and freedom prevail, with dignity for all.

CRRC-Georgia is a non-governmental, non-profit research organization with a mission to promote evidence-based debates on policy issues by providing reliable, up-to-date and accessible data and analysis. More information is available at <http://www.crrc.ge>