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CASE STUDY

REVISED EUPopLink Country report - Georgia

[version 2; peer review: 3 approved]

Sandro Tabatadze [1], Bacho Khuroshvili [2]

[1]Assistant Professor, Political Science, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi, Tbilisi, Georgia
[2]PhDc, Institute of Political Science, University of Wrocław, Wrocław, Lower Silesian Voivodeship, Poland

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Abstract

This country report examines the relationship between populism and Euroscepticism in Georgia, a case in which support for European integration has long constituted one of the most stable elements of public and political consensus. It traces how this consensus has become increasingly politicised under conditions of democratic erosion, geopolitical insecurity, and the Russia–Ukraine war. The report argues that Euroscepticism in Georgia has moved from the political margins to the centre of state power, through its growing articulation by populist political actors. While the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info articulates hard Euroscepticism through anti-liberal, nativist and openly pro-Russian narratives, the ruling Georgian Dream has developed a softer but increasingly assertive form of conditional Euroscepticism. Instead of opposing EU membership directly, Georgian Dream repackages European integration in terms of sovereignty, peace, tradition, dignity, and resistance to external coercion. Moreover, the ruling party's populist rhetoric portrays itself as the guardian of "the people" against all domestic forces that oppose its policies, as well as liberal civil society, the embassies of other states in Georgia, and the EU elites themselves. In this context, Euroscepticism becomes not merely a foreign-policy position, but a populist instrument of regime legitimation and authoritarian consolidation.

Keywords

Populism, Euroscepticism, Georgia, EU, EU candidate state, Georgian Dream

This article is included in the COST Actions gateway.

Open Peer Review

Approval Status ✓ ✓ ✓

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version 2 (revision) 23 Jul 2026	✓ view		
version 1 29 May 2026	? view	✓ view	✓ view

1. **Alessio Scopelliti**, University of Milan, Milan, Italy
2. **Eftichia Teperoglou**, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece
3. **Pernille Rieker**, ARENA – Centre for European Studies at the University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

This article is included in the Linking Euroscepticism and Populism (EUPopLink) collection.

Corresponding author: Sandro Tabatadze (sandro.tabatadze@tsu.ge)

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REVISED **Amendments from Version 1**

The updated version of the report includes three key changes:

Firstly, we have clarified why the Georgian Labor Party is not discussed in the chapter on the populism-Euroscepticism nexus.

Secondly, a table of election results has been added to illustrate the performance of populist parties in the most recent elections.

Thirdly, we have enhanced the explanation of the soft Euroscepticism associated with Georgian Dream, making it clearer.

Any further responses from the reviewers can be found at the end of the article

1. Introduction

The present country report was prepared as part of the EUPopLink COST Action[1] following the EUPopLink Theoretical Framework and guidelines.[2]

Since Georgia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Westernization and European integration have consistently been central to the political and public agenda.[3] However, this issue was overshadowed by civil wars from 1991 to 1993 and a severe socio-economic crisis. It was not until 1995, when Eduard Shevardnadze, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR and a Georgian diplomat, came to power, that the EU began to be seen as a partner for Georgia.[4] Nonetheless, high levels of corruption and internal political instability, along with a pragmatic balancing act with Russia, made European integration seem unrealistic to both the political elite and the public.[5]

The situation shifted dramatically after the Rose Revolution in 2003, a bloodless revolt that brought pro-Western young reformers to power in Georgia. The declared objective was to integrate the nation into Euro-Atlantic frameworks.[6] This strategic initiative fostered a closer relationship with the EU, and public opinion surveys revealed a resounding endorsement of this trajectory, with more than seventy-five percent of the population in agreement.[7] However, Saakashvili's post-revolutionary government adopted a fierce policymaking approach and sometimes set overly ambitious expectations for the population.[8] Consequently, in the later years of his presidency, many citizens began to feel disillusioned about European integration.

In 2012, Georgia experienced a democratic transition of power for the first and only time through elections. Despite accusations of having pro-Russian tendencies, the new government made European integration a key foreign policy priority, which was supported by the majority of the opposition and an overwhelming proportion of the population. In every parliamentary and presidential election, candidates from the ruling party and the main opposition promised closer ties with the EU.[9] This was evident in the signing of the Association Agreement in 2014, the establishment of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), the introduction of 90-day visa-free travel to the Schengen Area, and the granting of EU candidate status.[10] However, this trend has vividly shifted in recent years, signaling a sudden and unsettling change in foreign policy from the ruling party.

2. Populist political actors

In Georgia, populist political actors have traditionally had a limited influence. They were primarily composed of small political groups, many of which have not registered as official political parties.[11] Recently, however, new populist parties have emerged, and some established parties have adopted populist ideologies.[12] Below is a brief profile of each of these actors.

- **The Labor Party** is a left-wing populist party that has been active since 1995 and has consistently maintained its place in opposition. At various points, it has successfully gained entry into parliament, while at other times, it has operated exclusively as a non-parliamentary opposition.[13] The party's populist nature is evident in how its leaders portray themselves as the primary champions of the interests of the oppressed and impoverished, standing against a political elite composed of wealthy individuals, oligarchs, and bankers. Between 1999 and 2008, the party generally received between 6% and 12% of the parliamentary vote, but its electoral support declined sharply after 2012.[14]

- Small political unions like **Georgian March, Georgian Idea, and Georgian National Unity** were established between 2015 and 2016. These groups are known for their far-right and anti-immigration views.[15] They have

consistently struggled to achieve electoral success and are considered politically marginal. Their ideology is grounded in exclusive populism, promoting nativist ideas that prioritize the interests of ethnically Georgian Orthodox Christians, whom they believe deserve special attention due to their relatively small numbers.[16]

- **The Alliance of Patriots of Georgia** is a far-right populist party established in 2012 with the objective of thwarting the resurgence of liberal forces in power.[17] The party presents itself as a defender of Georgian Orthodox citizens and traditional values, actively opposing the political elite of both the current and past governments. While they achieved third place in the 2016 parliamentary elections with 5% of the vote, their involvement in public politics has diminished since that time.[18]

- **The Conservative Movement/Alt-Info** was founded in 2021 as a media outlet and transitioned into a political party in 2024. This organization embodies right-wing populism, portraying itself as the primary defender of the interests of the Georgian people against foreigners, Western liberals, migrants from North Africa and Asia, as well as global non-governmental and international organizations.[19] The party espouses anti-Western rhetoric and seeks to promote amicable relations between Georgia and Russia.[17] Following government interference in registration, they contested the 2024 parliamentary elections under the Patriotic Alliance of Georgia. According to the Central Election Commission results, they garnered 2.53% of the vote.

- **The Georgian Dream** (GD) party was founded in 2012 as a catch-all political movement and initially acted as an observer for the Party of European Socialists.[20] However, over the years, the ruling party has increasingly adopted characteristics of right-wing populism, presenting itself as the primary defender of national and sovereign interests against the global elite. In the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, GD has advanced the conspiracy theory that decisions made by the U.S. and the EU are heavily influenced by a faction they call the "Global War Party." GD contends that this so-called Global War Party, akin to a deep state, consists of self-proclaimed liberals who oppose national interests and aim to undermine the Georgian government. They argue that this undermining is intended to coerce Georgia into conflict with Russia and ultimately facilitate greater control of the Georgian populace by the global elite.[21] Initially, a faction of the GD known as "People's Power" expressed these strong positions. This faction formally separated from the ruling party in 2022, aiming to "reveal the truth to the people".[22] However, in the 2024 parliamentary elections, its members decided to rejoin the GD list to participate in the elections.

Table 1 summarises the parliamentary electoral performance of the main populist parties discussed in this report, highlighting GD's electoral dominance and the limited or declining electoral relevance of the other actors.

3. Positions on 'Europe' and the Populism-Euroscepticism nexus

Only three of the populist political actors previously discussed are currently active: the Labor Party, the Conservative Movement/Alt Info, and the Georgian Dream. Thus, this section will address these parties exclusively. It is worth noting that the **Labor Party** remains broadly pro-European but is occasionally critical of EU political actors, particularly for what it sees as weak or inconsistent responses to democratic backsliding in Georgia. Its scepticism therefore concerns the EU's conduct rather than European integration itself.[23] Therefore, the discussion will first focus on the extra parliamentary opposition party, followed by the ruling party.

The Conservative Movement/Alt-Info initially established a media outlet before evolving into a political party in 2024, primarily operating through online platforms. The party holds a *hard Eurosceptic* stance, asserting that Georgia is unlikely to join the EU and that further debate on this issue is unnecessary. They oppose the current policies of the EU,

Table 1. Parliamentary electoral performance of selected populist parties in Georgia, 2012–2024.

Political party	2012	2016	2020	2024
Georgian Dream	54.97% (electoral coalition with other non-populist parties)	48.68%	48.22%	53.93%
Georgian Labour Party	1.24%	3.14%	1.00%	0.73%
Alliance of Patriots of Georgia	—	5.01	3.14	2.44% (joint list)
Conservative Movement/Alt-Info	—	—	—	
Georgian March	—	—	0.25	—

Source: Central Election Commission of Georgia.

as well as the foundational principles upon which it was established. Leaders of Alt-Info compare the EU to the Soviet Union, viewing it as a centralized entity that undermines the sovereignty of nation-states while imposing a liberal agenda on its member countries.[24]

The party exhibits *cultural and political Euroscepticism*, opposing what they label the "Brussels dictatorship" and the EU's positions on issues such as abortion, gender equality, diversity, and migration. According to Alt-Info leaders, Georgian and European values are fundamentally incompatible. They assert that a significant portion of the population seeks European integration primarily for economic benefits, believing they are being misled.[25] Some party members even use the term "Europeanists" in a sarcastic manner, equating it with a sense of powerlessness.

Moreover, Alt-Info leaders frequently reference Brexit to reinforce their views, envisioning an ideal Europe comprised of independent nation-states. The party has firmly opposed the EU's COVID-19 policies, including vaccinations and the implementation of green cards. Their support for Georgia's rapprochement with Russia is evident, as they sometimes visit the Kremlin.[26] Since the onset of the Russian-Ukrainian war, they have claimed that the Zelensky government was misled by the West, insisting that Ukraine will ultimately face defeat. The party advocates for Georgia to adopt a neutral stance in this conflict to avoid a scenario reminiscent of the Georgian Rose Revolution or the Maidan protests.[27]

Leaders of Alt-Info have openly accused the Joe Biden administration and EU officials of fostering the "Ukrainianization" of Georgia. They contend that this revolutionary scenario could lead to conflict with Russia. From their perspective, Donald Trump's reelection and his relationships with Russia and other world leaders suggest that the influence of globalists and liberals is dwindling—a development they view positively.

In summary, within its populist framework, the EU is perceived as part of an oppressive elite, while ethnically Georgian Orthodox individuals are seen as an oppressed group. Alt-Info argues that only a government prioritizing national interests, such as their own, can effectively safeguard these interests.

Georgian Dream (GD) is a *soft Eurosceptic* party that supports Georgia's potential accession to the EU, albeit under specific circumstances. This position allows it to be characterized as conditionally Eurosceptic. In the 2024 parliamentary elections, the ruling party adopted the motto: "Towards Europe only with peace, only with dignity, only with prosperity".[28]

The party also engages in Eurosceptic rhetoric, asserting that Georgia has no political lessons to learn from what it portrays as corrupt bureaucrats in Brussels and advocating for restraint in making political concessions merely to gain their favour. Members of the GD frequently label most MEPs as corrupt, lacking principles, and lacking substantial influence. This rhetoric extends populist anti-elitism beyond Georgia's domestic political arena by presenting EU representatives as part of an external elite that disregards the sovereignty and democratic choices of the Georgian people. At the polity level, GD therefore challenges EU conditionality and what it describes as Brussels' interference in Georgia's domestic affairs.[27]

Furthermore, GD exhibits elements of *cultural Euroscepticism*, particularly concerning issues such as gender equality and LGBTQ rights. Its vision of an ideal Europe is reminiscent of the perspectives held by Viktor Orbán and Robert Fico. GD leaders emphasize minimal influence from Brussels and prioritize common values identified by the chairman of GD—namely, respect for God, homeland, and family. The party also portrays the EU's positions on gender, LGBTQ rights, anti-discrimination, and civil society as threats to Georgian identity, Orthodox Christianity, and traditional family values. GD's Euroscepticism therefore goes beyond attacks on EU elites and also reflects a broader rejection of the EU's liberal cultural agenda.[28]

Until 2022, before the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the GD exhibited a fragmented and predominantly reactionary form of Euroscepticism. While the party generally supported European integration, it often remained silent when faced with specific criticisms akin to the behavior of a sulky child. Its stance on issues like Brexit and Covid-19 was typically in alignment with the EU. However, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the ruling party announced that it would not participate in the sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia and would refrain from openly supporting Ukraine.[21] This decision was rooted in a fear of Russia and concerns expressed by some EU officials regarding the potential for opening a second front in the conflict, which ultimately became a significant cornerstone of GD's Eurosceptic position.

Since that period, the party has been criticizing the practice and future of the EU, as well as accusing it of double standards. According to the GD conspiracy, representatives of the Global War Party (a formation similar to the deep state) are in the

ruling elites of both the EU and some of its states, and it was they who planned to start a revolution in Georgia and then drag it into war with Russia.[21] Therefore, the ruling team declared itself oppressed and said that only it could defend the interests of the Georgian people against the oppressive elite, including some influential representatives of the EU, which is a good example of the combination of populism and Euroscepticism.

Since 2022, the Euroscepticism demonstrated by the GD, particularly following the involvement of representatives from certain EU countries and its own members, has taken on a more pronounced tone. Rather than reflecting the behavior of an innocent child, it now resembles that of a smug teenager.[21] This style of Euroscepticism remains reactionary but is assertive enough to dismiss numerous concerns with a sweeping motion.

Furthermore, after Donald Trump secured his victory in the United States, the GD claimed that a strategic partnership with the US would soon be restored due to "ideological convergence".[28] It was subsequently followed by a letter from Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze to President Trump, in which he conveyed wishes for Trump to prevail over the so-called "deep state," as the Georgian government did it with the "Global War Party" elite. However, the current US administration has yet to respond.

4. Responses to Euroscepticism and consequences

The pro-European opposition, which vigorously counters the Eurosceptic narrative, characterizes both the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info and Georgian Dream not only as openly Eurosceptic but also as pro-Russian forces, effectively creating the "cordon sanitare" around them.[29] Consequently, European integration has become the focal point of public-political discussions.

However, the current state of modern Georgia is alarming, with a notable erosion in democratic norms and a consolidation of authoritarianism.[30] Several members of the pro-European opposition are imprisoned, while others face severe financial constraints or are at risk of incarceration. As a result, despite their "adversarial" response to the anti-European sentiment, the influence of the pro-European elite remains limited.

As for the concrete consequences of populist political actors' Euroscepticism, both foreign and domestic political dimensions are important here. In this regard, it is worth noting:

- Termination of European integration by Georgia's ruling party;
- The emergence of new partners (Hungary and Slovakia in Europe, Iran and China in Asia);
- Sanctions by some EU countries on the Georgian government and individuals close to them;
- Suspension of ongoing educational, agricultural, and cultural projects by the EU and its member states;
- Public confrontation between the embassies of the EU and several of its member states and the GD;
- The Georgian ruling party's refusal to allow some EU citizens with anti-government statements to cross the border;
- Incitement of conspiratorial populist Eurosceptic positions among the ruling party's supporters;
- Strengthening democratic erosion involves imposing restrictions on assembly, expression, and other civil liberties, as well as actively persecuting political opponents. It includes new legislation on foreign agents, media censorship, limitations on wearing masks during protests and abolishing the concept of gender, among other measures.

These results align with GD's populist narrative, which is linked to their Euroscepticism.

5. Conclusion

The Georgian case is particularly noteworthy because Euroscepticism and populism have long remained outside the political mainstream, historically confined to marginal non-parliamentary actors. Since 2012, however, the EU dimension has become progressively politicized as right-wing populist narratives - rooted in sovereignty and cultural protectionism - found an ideal target in the EU's value-based conditionality. This alignment enabled these actors,

including eventually the ruling party, to reframe Europe not simply as a strategic destination but as a political battleground. Non-populist actors, while consistently defending integration, have also contributed to the heightened salience of the EU issue: their criticism of democratic erosion provides populists with further ammunition to depict them as agents of "external pressure." The Russia-Ukraine war intensified these dynamics, allowing Euroscepticism to move from the margins into the core of state policy.

Therefore, several key avenues for future research arise from this case. First, the Russia-Ukrainian war can be seen as a crisis that has accelerated the growth of populist Euroscepticism, sparking new ideas within this context across nearly all European countries. Thus, the urgency of examining the effects of the Russia-Ukrainian war on this phenomenon cannot be overstated.

Second, analyzing Georgia as a case of rapid transformation and contrasting it with other Eastern European nations, such as Romania—where pro-European forces have demonstrated significant democratic resilience—can provide important insights.

Third, the populist and Eurosceptic rhetoric of both the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info and the Georgian Dream, seemingly influenced by policy transfers from Hungary, presents a rich area for further exploration. This exploration, combined with comparative public policy concepts like policy learning, policy transfer, and lesson drawing, could yield valuable insights.

Lastly, conducting a systematic comparative study between the Western Balkan states and the Eastern European trio—old and new candidates for EU membership—would contribute to a deeper understanding of the political dynamics within EU candidate member states.

Ethics and consent

Ethical approval and consent were not required.

Data availability

No data are associated with this article.

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Open Peer Review

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Version 2

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✔ **Alessio Scopelliti**
University of Milan, Milan, Italy

The updated version effectively incorporates the recommendations, and I am happy to endorse this final draft

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Version 1

Reviewer Report 15 July 2026

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✔ **Pernille Rieker**
ARENA – Centre for European Studies at the University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway

The article provides a rich and timely analysis of how populist actors in Georgia have progressively mainstreamed Euroscepticism, transforming it from a marginal stance into a central instrument of regime legitimation and authoritarian consolidation. The empirical narrative is detailed and well-structured, especially in tracing the evolution from pro-European consensus to conditional and hard Eurosceptic positions within the ruling party and newer far-right actors. The distinction

between hard Euroscepticism (Alt-Info) and conditional, sovereignty-focused Euroscepticism (Georgian Dream) is analytically valuable, and the linkage to wider dynamics such as democratic erosion and the Russia–Ukraine war is convincing. At the same time, some of the more ambitious claims—particularly regarding the depth of policy reorientation and the precise mechanisms through ˆwhich populist rhetoric reshapes foreign-policy choices—would benefit from clearer conceptual operationalization and more explicit engagement with the broader comparative literature on populism, external governance, and EU candidate states.

Overall, the report is a strong and useful contribution that opens important avenues for future comparative research, including the role of crises, policy transfer from Hungary and other illiberal governments, and the differentiated trajectories of Euroscepticism across Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans.

Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Yes

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Yes

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?
Yes

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Political science, security studies, eu studies

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 14 July 2026

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Eftichia Teperoglou
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

This country report provides a comprehensive and insightful analysis of the evolving relationship between populism and Euroscepticism in Georgia. As one of the traditionally most pro-European countries among the EU's Eastern partners, Georgia has experienced a gradual politicization of European integration in recent years. By linking domestic democratic backsliding with shifts in foreign policy rhetoric, the report demonstrates how European integration has evolved from a broadly shared national objective into a highly contested political issue.

It convincingly shows how Euroscepticism has moved from the political margins to the center of political power, with the ruling Georgian Dream increasingly framing European integration through narratives of sovereignty, national dignity, traditional values, and resistance to external influence. The distinction between the hard Euroscepticism of the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info and the softer, conditional Euroscepticism promoted by the ruling party is particularly well developed and represents one of the report's key contributions. The report also demonstrates how the Russia–Ukraine war accelerated these developments, creating the political context in which populist narratives and Eurosceptic rhetoric became increasingly prominent.

Overall, by combining historical context with theoretical perspectives on populism and Euroscepticism, the report makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of contemporary Georgian politics and offers useful insights for comparative research on EU candidate countries.

Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Yes

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?
Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?
Yes

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: EU politics, Euroscepticism, populism, electoral behaviour, European Parliament elections, party system change, public opinion, survey methodology

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of

expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

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Alessio Scopelliti
University of Milan, Milan, Italy

The introduction provides an excellent historical overview of Georgia from independence to recent developments, effectively contextualizing the trajectories leading up to 2014 when populism and the EU matter entered the political discussion in the country.
The second section offers a useful description of populist parties that emerged in the mid-2010s. However, for readers unfamiliarity with these parties and Georgian politics, it would be beneficial to include a figure showcasing their electoral performances from their founding to the present. This would allow readers to better grasp the parties' relevance and trajectory over time.
The third section addresses the core contribution of this report, by stating the populism-Euoscepticism nexus within Georgian party politics. Three out of five populist actors are described in this section. The rationale is to explore only those parties that are still active nowadays (I insist that a plot, in the previous section, showcasing parties' electoral performance might strength this decision. Otherwise, this is a lost opportunity to explore as many actors as possible, maybe also to explore the reasons for their disappearance). Moving on to the three parties addressed in this section, I have the following comments:

- Labor Party is only briefly addressed in the analysis. While the authors recognize it to have a few Eurosceptic stances, the party is predominantly characterized as pro-European. It would be worthwhile to provide more information about the party's – albeit minimal – skepticism toward the EU. Specifically, what aspects of EU integration did the Labor Party question, even while endorsing the broader integration project? This effort would significantly enhance the report's contribution to discussions about parties holding multiple nuanced stances cross-cutting positions on the EU simultaneously expressing both pro- and anti-EU positions rather than adopting monolithic stances on this matter.
- The analysis of the Conservative Movement/Alt-Info is clear and highly specific. The authors explicitly identify the type of Euroscepticism (cultural and political), connecting it to populism (although it would be more beneficial to be more explicit by citing exclusionary populism) and articulate the grounds for skepticism in a clear and compelling manner. It is interesting, on the one hand, that the party envisages the EU as the Soviet Union, thus, recalling its own historical trauma. On the other hand, it does endorse Russian stance in the invasion of Ukraine, due to similarities of the government's regime trajectory towards authoritarianism is moving to. The implications of such developments are clearly addressed in the last sections of the report.
- Regarding Georgian Dream, it would be useful to provide more explicit information about the nature of its soft Euroscepticism. The authors refer to the Populism-Euroscepticism nexus based on valence politics, specifically focusing on criticism of EU elites accused of

being corrupt. More explicitly, the authors state that this matter (EU elites' corruption) is "a good example of the combination of populism and Euroscepticism". However, such a link does not really address the core of the Populism-Euroscepticism nexus but rather explains how the anti-elitist core feature of populism is expressed – in this case, by identifying EU elites as the enemy. There is no real explanation of how the EU is criticized substantively, but only how it is used as a "means" to articulate anti-elitism. It is not clearly articulated how this anti-elite stance translates into Euroscepticism in terms of polity or policy dimensions. I would suggest explaining this nexus more explicitly: what specific aspects of EU integration does Georgian Dream oppose? The authors already briefly mention the cultural dimension: "issues such as gender equality and LGBTQ rights". I think the authors should dedicate more emphasis to this aspect – the cultural dimension – as it directly connects skepticism toward EU core values of equality, diversity, and inclusion with the core characteristic of exclusionary populism. This would clarify that Georgian Dream's Euroscepticism is not merely instrumental anti-elitism (using EU elites as scapegoats) but reflects substantive opposition to EU cultural liberalism. By elaborating on the cultural dimension of Euroscepticism, the authors would demonstrate that Georgian Dream's opposition to the EU is both strategic (anti-elite rhetoric) and ideological (rejection of liberal cultural values).

The fourth section successfully lists the consequences of populist Eurosceptic developments in Georgia, particularly the country's drift toward authoritarianism. I have no comments on this section. Finally, the conclusion clearly identifies avenues for further research.

Is the background of the case's history and progression described in sufficient detail?
Yes

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?
Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?
Not applicable

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?
No source data required

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?
Yes

Is the case presented with sufficient detail to be useful for teaching or other practitioners?
Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Party Politics, Populism, Euroscepticism, Far-Right Mainstreaming

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Author Response 14 Jul 2026

Sandro Tabatadze

Thank you for your positive assessment and constructive comments. The updated version of the report includes three key changes:

Firstly, we have clarified why the Georgian Labor Party is not discussed in the chapter on the populism-Euroscepticism nexus.

Secondly, a table of election results has been added to illustrate the performance of populist parties in the most recent elections.

Thirdly, we have enhanced the explanation of the soft Euroscepticism associated with Georgian Dream, clarifying it.

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.