



Facts vs Manipulation

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Manipulation # 9

**The Recycled Claim That a "Majority" of OSCE States
Rejected the Moscow Mechanism on Georgia**

5 July 2026

The Claim

Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament of Georgia and Head of Georgia's Permanent Delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, told the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security of the OSCE PA's 33rd Annual Session in The Hague on 5 July 2026 that "the activation of the 'Moscow Mechanism' and its conclusions were not supported by the majority of OSCE participating states" [1].

This is not a new claim. It reproduces, almost word for word, a narrative first circulated in mid-March 2026 by Georgian Dream officials and media outlets, immediately after the Moscow Mechanism report was published. On 13 March 2026, the pro-government, UK-sanctioned broadcaster Imedi reported that "32 out of 57 OSCE member states did not support the conclusion of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism," naming the United States, France, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, Romania, Malta, Armenia and Azerbaijan as states that withheld support [2].

Facts

The Moscow Mechanism does not require, and has never required, the approval of a majority of the OSCE's 57 participating states. It was created specifically to bypass the OSCE's consensus rule for exceptional cases. Under paragraph 12 of the 1991 Moscow Document, a fact-finding mission can be established at the request of a single participating state with the backing of at least nine others — a minimum of ten states acting in unison, out of 57. ODIHR's own summary of the Georgia mission confirms this legal basis explicitly: the mission was established "at the request of another participating State with the support of at least nine other participating States (paragraph 12)" [3]. No vote of the full membership occurs at any stage, and the OSCE Permanent Council has no power to block or overturn a report once a mission is completed.

On 29 January 2026, the Moscow Mechanism was invoked with respect to Georgia by 24 states, on the basis of a joint letter submitted by 23 states (Albania, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom), which Poland also joined [4]. This is more than double the minimum threshold set by the Moscow Document. The rapporteur, Professor Patrycja Grzebyk, visited Georgia on 17–18 February 2026, met senior Georgian officials including the Prime Minister, and presented her report — "Developments in Georgia in Respect of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms since Spring 2024" — to the OSCE Permanent Council on 12 March 2026, finding "a marked democratic backsliding" and recommending, among other things, the release of persons it identified as held for political reasons and the repeal of several contested laws.

The claim that "32" or "31" states "did not support" the mechanism or its report conflates two entirely different things: states that co-signed the invocation letter and states that simply did not. Among the roughly 32–33 non-signatory states are Russia, Belarus and Turkmenistan — states themselves subject to past Moscow Mechanism missions over serious human rights violations — as well as numerous smaller states that never took any position, either for or against, on the mechanism or its findings. No formal mechanism exists, and consequently none was used, by which any OSCE member state cast a vote "against" the Georgia report.

Subsequent developments have reinforced rather than undermined the report's institutional standing. On 24 June 2026, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a resolution that directly endorses the findings of the OSCE Moscow Mechanism report, noting that its conclusions are consistent with the Assembly's previous assessments of democratic backsliding in Georgia [5]. Moreover, at the very same 33rd OSCE PA Annual Session in The Hague at which Samkharadze made the above statement, a draft resolution sponsored by US Senator Joe Wilson, "Safeguarding the Integrity of Elections and Fundamental Freedoms in Georgia," was tabled for inclusion in the Hague Declaration, drawing on findings consistent with the Moscow Mechanism report [6].

The Key Manipulation

The manipulation lies in the way that non-participation in the formal co-sponsorship of the mechanism is presented as if it were an active vote against it, thereby creating the illusion of a "majority" verdict on a procedure that, by its nature, never puts the question to a vote of the full membership. The same false statistic — first published by Georgian Dream-aligned media in March 2026 and echoed by the party's own Secretary General — was redeployed, four months later, by a senior parliamentary official from the floor of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly itself, pointing to a durable and repeated messaging line rather than an isolated misstatement. The fact that the claim survived unchanged even after an independent outlet explicitly identified and refuted it as a "false narrative" in April 2026 further undermines any suggestion that its repetition in July was inadvertent.

Conclusion

The claim that a "majority" of OSCE participating states failed to support the Moscow Mechanism or its findings on Georgia is false. The Moscow Mechanism requires the support of only ten states to be triggered; it was invoked by 24, more than double that threshold, and its findings have since been endorsed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and referenced in further OSCE PA action. States that did not co-sign the invocation letter — among them Russia, Belarus and Turkmenistan — did not thereby cast a vote against it, because the mechanism's rules do not provide for any such vote at all.

Verdict: FALSE

Sources

- [1] Interpressnews, "Nikoloz Samkharadze: the activation of the 'Moscow Mechanism' and its conclusions were not supported by the majority of OSCE participating states," 5 July 2026 — primary source for the statement under examination. <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ka/article/874453>
- [2] imedinews, "A total of 32 member states of the ... OSCE ... did not support the report prepared on Georgia under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism" — pro-government outlet; documents the origin of the "32 states" narrative and the list of named states. <https://info.imedi.ge/en/politics/8965/a-total-of-32-member-states-of-the-organisation-for-security-and-cooperation-in-europe-osce-did-not-support-the-report-prepared-on-georgia-under-the-osce-moscow-mechanism>
- [3] ODIHR, "Moscow Mechanism invoked in respect of Georgia," Notification NV/82/2026, 12 March 2026 — primary OSCE document setting out the paragraph 12 legal threshold and the list of 23 invoking states. https://odihr.osce.org/sites/default/files/documents/official_documents/2026/03/odgal0009c1%20ODIHR%20NV%2082-2026%20report_Moscow%20Mechanism%20invoked%20in%20respect%20of%20Georgia_0.pdf
- [4] GOV.UK / Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, "OSCE Moscow Mechanism Report on Georgia: Joint statement," 12 March 2026 — confirms 23 named states plus Poland (24 total). High credibility, primary government statement. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/osce-moscow-mechanism-report-on-georgia-joint-statement-march-2026>
- [5] Georgia Today, "PACE adopts resolution on Georgia, warns of continued democratic backsliding," 25/06/26 <https://georgiatoday.ge/pace-adopts-resolution-on-georgia-warns-of-continued-democratic-backsliding/>
- [6] SOVA, "Wilson's Resolution in OSCE PA Calls on Georgia to Release 'Political Prisoners'," 4 July 2026 — independent regional outlet, describes the draft resolution before the 33rd OSCE PA Annual Session. <https://sovanews.tv/en/2026/07/04/wilsons-resolution-in-osce-pa-calls-on-georgia-to-release-political-prisoners/>