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On the Cover. Photo by Sofie Bedford: This photo captures a pre-election rally in Tbilisi, Georgia, on October 20, 2024, when pro-Europe Georgians took to the streets to protest the ruling party. Since taking power in 2012, the Georgian Dream party has increasingly been seen by many as steering the country toward democratic backsliding and closer alignment with Russia, undermining Georgia's prospects for further EU integration. Against this backdrop, the October 26, 2024 parliamentary election was widely framed as the country's decisive choice between a "Russian" and a "European" identity. Tens of thousands of protesters marched from five different points across the capital before converging on Freedom Square that evening for a concert. Though the street vendor pictured here wasn't formally part of the demonstration, the image captures how visible and significant national and geopolitical symbolism has become in contemporary Georgia. The Georgian, EU, and US flags on display reflect how closely many Georgians tie their national identity to a Euro-Atlantic vision for the country's future. The photo was taken during fieldwork under the CARSI project (No. 101086415), funded by the Horizon Marie Curie Staff Exchange programme.

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