

Politics

Georgian PM, foreign politicians praise the signing of the EU-backed agreement, ex-President Saakashvili calls for the UNM to sign the agreement after Nika Melia is released

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Charles Michel visits Georgia following political agreement mediated by US and EU



The mediation process of the agreement between the government and the opposition began on March 1, 2021, during the first visit of Charles Michel.

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The President of the European Council Charles Michel arrived in Georgia after the Georgian opposition and authorities signed the EU-proposed agreement. Michel expressed his satisfaction with his stay in Tbilisi and noted that the visit was especially fruitful this time. According to Michel, the agreement be-

tween the parties is the beginning of a new phase and requires a lot of work.

"The political crisis is coming to an end and political involvement has already become sustainable. Today is a new beginning, which requires a lot of work that Georgia has to go through in terms of EU integration," said Michel after a face-to-face meeting with the President of Georgia. He said the process of reaching an

agreement was not easy, although more work is starting today. He also expressed confidence that equal forces would be represented in the Parliament of Georgia and that decisions would be made with inclusive involvement:

Michel also held meetings with the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament and a few opposition bloc representatives.

After his meeting with PM Irakli Gharibashvili, Michel said that 'it is not time for anyone to sleep on laurel leaves', and added that 'this is the moment to take up the challenging reforms in the Parliament and to work towards them'.

"These reforms are what Georgia needs. They will ensure your citizens' demands are better met, and what will also open up the path to deeper cooperation between Georgia and the EU."

According to PM Gharibashvili, there will be no obstacles for the implementation of the document from the Georgian Dream's side.

Michel emphasized that the EU is Georgia's 'strongest partner' and donor with more than 200 ongoing projects and noted that the EU supports Georgia's reforms 'to consolidate democracy and the rule of law'.

"Our readiness, our support will continue in the future, of course, after we see the strengthening and deepening of the reforms. All of this is very important, especially against the background of a difficult regional situation," stated Michel, who also spoke about the situation along Ukraine's borders, stressing that the EU strongly supports Georgia's territorial integrity. The European Council also stressed out the goal of strengthening the EU Association Agreement with Georgia, Ukraine and Moldova, welcoming the idea of bringing together the leaders of the three countries to discuss the agreement.

The visit of the President of the European Council to Georgia will end today.



Charles Michel met with parliament members from the ruling party and the opposition who signed the political agreement.

Georgian PM, foreign politicians praise the signing of the EU-backed agreement, ex-President Saakashvili calls for the UNM to sign the agreement after Nika Melia is released

BY VERONIKA MALINBOYM

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Garibashvili praised the signing of the EU-backed agreement to end the political crisis in the country. On his official Twitter account, PM Garibashvili posted:

“Today, Georgia is a winner. The majority of the Georgian opposition parties signed the EU mediated agreement. We are grateful to the President of the European Commission, EU Delegation to Georgia, and the US Embassy in Georgia. Democracy and Dialogue have prevailed again.”

Many of the Western politicians have also applauded the reaching of the compromise between the ruling party and the opposition bloc. President of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda stated in his Twitter post that he welcomed the agreement reached in Georgia:

“Welcome, the achieved political consensus in Georgia! The EU, President of the European Commission and the USA joint mediation efforts proved fruitful. Lithuania supports Georgia’s European aspirations and strengthening of democratic values!” read the post.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden Ann Linde expressed a similar sentiment:

“I welcome the agreement between political leaders in Georgia. Encourage those who have not yet signed, to do so. The agreement and its implementa-



tion will strengthen Georgia’s democratic development and European integration. Grateful to the President of European Commission for all efforts”, Minister Linde posted on her official Twitter account.

The US Embassy to Georgia released an official statement in which it applauded the signing of an agreement and reinstated the US’s readiness to assist the Georgian Parliament in imple-

menting the agreement in the upcoming months:

“While signing the agreement is a significant step, ending months of negotiations, we recognize that its implementation is equally important. The United States is committed to assisting the Parliament to ensure this agreement achieves its aspirations”, the statement reads.

Similarly, the UK Embassy

in Georgia tweeted earlier that it welcomes the resolution of the political crisis in Georgia:

“Welcome progress towards resolution of the political crisis. Call on all political parties who have not yet signed the agreement to have the courage to do so, in the interests of #Georgia’s citizens and the country’s continued Euro-Atlantic progress”.

The ruling Georgian Dream

party, as well as the opposition Lelo for Georgia, the Republican party, Citizens alliance, Girchi, Girchi- More Freedom, and Strategy Agamshenebeli have already signed the proposal aimed at solving the political crisis that erupted in Georgia when the results of the October 2020 Parliamentary Elections have been released.

Earlier, the former President of Georgia Mikhail Saakashvili made a statement in which it called for the United National Movement to sign an agreement and enter the Parliament as soon as the party chairman Nika Melia is released:

“Nika Melia should walk free without any humiliating conditions and without some sort of bail, just like he wishes, because he is being kept there illegally and with no wrongdoing to blame him for. However, once he is out of prison, and so long as all the above-mentioned conditions are kept, I would like to call on the United National Movement to sign this agreement, because with it, in the fall, together with the local self-government elections, it will bring about a kind of a referendum to get the Georgian Dream to abandon its power,” Saakashvili said in his address.

Former President Saakashvili promised that he would visit Georgia in autumn prior to the self-government elections “to be there with the United National Movement.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Lelo’s Japaridze: We need to find a way to release Nika Melia immediately

Lelo’s Badri Japaridze made a statement regarding Nika Melia’s staying in prison. “He is staying strong. He cer-

tainly does not have the feeling that the political crisis in the country has eased today because until Nika Melia is released, it is too early to talk about easing the political crisis.”

Japaridze said that the Georgian Dream must understand that a way out of this situation has to be found, and added that “this cannot happen at the expense of sacrificing moral principles.”

“Offering bail is not a solution, it is clear to everyone that Nika Melia considers paying bail illegal.”

Lelo leader Japaridze is going to visit Melia in jail after meeting with Charles Michel in the parliament. According to the party’s press service, Japaridze is going to introduce the arrested UNM leader to the positions of

Charles Michel.

Lelo, like part of the opposition parties, signed the document offered by Charles Michel. The National Movement and European Georgia have not signed the document.

Ugulava: Opposition should sign the document, but the boycott should end after Melia’s release

Politician Gigi Ugulava is responding to a new document proposed by Western partners to the government and the opposition, saying tactical changes are needed to achieve strategic goals.

According to Ugulava, the opposition, after uniting around

Melia as a political prisoner, should unite around him as the sole candidate for Tbilisi mayor.

“For this, I support the opposition signing the Charles Michel document, but ending the parliamentary boycott when Nika Melia leaves prison. It is inconceivable that the opposition sits in Parliament while Melia- in prison,” wrote Ugulava.

Public defender calls on Prosecutor’s Office to release Melia

Public Defender of Georgia Nino Lomjaria visited Nika Melia, Chairman of the National Movement in Rustavi N12 Penitentiary Institution.

According to the ombudsman, Melia’s position on the bail issue

remains unchanged.

He also noted that the prosecutor’s office can dismiss the chairman of the UNM today and appealed to the investigation agency to make the decision as soon as possible.

My position is that the prosecutor’s office can release Nika Melia today. This is possible even without bail, and if an agreement is reached to stabilize the political situation, an agreement and civil peace can take place. They are completely free to make this decision. My recommendation would be to the prosecutor’s office to make this decision as soon as possible, but I don’t know what the Prosecutor’s Office or the government are planning on,” stated Lomjaria.

Weather

Wednesday, April 21

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 25°C

Night Showers

Low: 12°C

Thursday, April 22

Day Showers

High: 18°C

Night Light Rain

Low: 9°C

published by

The Messenger

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.4499; Euro - 4.1585; GBP - 4.8219; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.5224; Swiss Franc - 3.7704

ESU Public Speaking Competition 2021

On April 19, the English Speaking Union of Georgia held Public Speaking Competition at the British Corner and was sponsored by the Bank of Georgia.

ESU is a unique global educational charity that brings together people of different languages and cultures.

One of the most important projects of the ESU is International Public Speaking Competition.

The first competition was held in 1981 and included speakers from only three countries. Now, there are more than 50

ESUs all over the world.

International Public Speaking Competition is the largest public speaking competition in the world. It involves 1000 000 students and represents one of the clearest manifestations of the goals of the ESU: promoting friendship and understanding through the English language.

Marina Tsitsishvili set up the English-Speaking Union in Georgia in 1998. ESU-Georgia has been organizing this competition for 23 years.

ESU-Georgia has already managed to

send 36 young Georgians to take part in the final round in London.

Unfortunately, this year, due to the pandemic, the final will be held online. The winner will still have the opportunity to enjoy a welcome meeting to attend the training sessions with the most experienced tutors from London.

This year's theme is "The best route to change engages all voices," and the winners of the competition are Eleni Basilashvili, first Prize, Meriem Gumushi, runner-up and Elizabeth Metreveli, third prize.

Members of the jury were: Rian Harker Harris, Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy, HE Mark Clayton, British Ambassador, Anthony Brumwell, Military Attache, Christopher Anderson, Cultural Attache at the American Embassy, Mariam Perishvili, a BOG representative, Tamara Tsuleiskiri, Director of Information Centre on NATO and EU, Sophia Gorgodze, the Director of the National Assessment and Examinations Center (NAEC) and Marina Tsitsishvili, ESU-Georgia President.

