

By THE MESSENGER STAFF

Zalkaliani: We Stand by Ukraine

Georgian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Davit Zalkaliani has joined the #StandWithUkraine campaign in support of Ukraine on Twitter.

He writes that Georgia stands by Ukraine.

"It is completely unacceptable to threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any country. Georgia is in solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. We stand by Ukraine," Zalkaliani wrote.

For more than two months now, Russia has deployed hundreds of thousands of troops along the Ukrainian border. The West fears that Russia is planning an attack on Ukraine. The Kremlin justifies military mobilization for security reasons.

A meeting of the NATO-Russia Council was held in Brussels on January 12. After the meeting, Jens Stoltenberg said that NATO offered Russia concrete ways to increase the transparency of military exercises to avoid dangerous military incidents and reduce spatial and cyber threats.

Russia, for its part, has reiterated its demands: the abolition of NATO military positions near Ukraine, the refusal to expand the alliance, and the reversal of a decision made at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Ukraine and Georgia would inevitably become members of the alliance.

In response, Jens Stoltenberg said that in the event of a Russian invasion of Ukraine, the strengthening of the Eastern European member states of the Alliance would be seriously considered.

At the same time, according to the Baltic states, they are working with



Davit Zalkaliani

NATO to increase the military contingent of the alliance in these countries.

US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said that while the United States was ready to listen to Moscow's concerns, it would be difficult to make any progress until Russia de-escalated the situation along the Ukrainian border.

According to Anthony Blinken, it is impossible to discuss the withdrawal of troops from Eastern Europe and the re-

fusal to expand NATO.

In addition, according to American media, the Biden administration has developed a new, tougher package of sanctions against Russia in case it invades Ukraine.

It should be noted that on January 21, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov met again in Geneva.

After the meeting, Blinken said he did

not expect Russia and the US to resolve their differences through meetings, but expressed hope that the parties would pursue a diplomatic path and resolve the issue peacefully.

On January 22, the first batch of US military aid arrived in Ukraine. The donation includes approximately lethal weapons, worth £200,000 including ammunition. The assistance is worth \$200 million.

The News in Brief

PREPARED
BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

The President of Armenia has resigned

Armenian President Armen Sargsyan has resigned. The statement was posted on the president's website.

In a statement, he criticized the president's limited rights, saying he could not, in fact, take effective steps to influence the process.

"We live in a reality where the president can not influence the issues of war

and peace. In a reality in which he can not veto laws that he deems inappropriate for the nation and the state.

The president does not have the necessary tools for the country and the nation to influence the radical processes of domestic and foreign policy during this difficult period.

"We have a paradoxical situation when the president has to be a guarantor of statehood without any real instrument," he wrote in a statement.

Sarkisian has been the President of Armenia since April 9, 2018.

Rally in Tbilisi Held in Support of Ukraine

A rally in support of the country is being held in front of the Ukrainian Embassy in Tbilisi. Politicians, activists, and citizens are present at the rally.

Protesters say that Georgia and Ukraine have one enemy, so it is important that Georgia openly supports a friendly country.

A representative of the embassy addressed the protesters and thanked them for their support.

The organizer of the rally is the movement Shame. Earlier, the organization also issued an open letter to the Ukrainian embassy, expressing concern and support for Russia's potentially aggressor neighbor, especially in the absence of tangible support from the Georgian authorities.



EU4Digital kicks off testing of eSignature pilot extension

The EU4Digital Facility has kicked off its extended eSignature pilot activities.

The programme will test the technical interoperability of cross-border eSignature between Armenia, Georgia, Ukraine and EU member state Estonia, aiming to expand testing with further Eastern Partner countries. This includes testing of eSignature creation, timestamping, validation and certificate status verification components.

The pilot implementation will be based on the Technical memorandum which describes the technical aspects of eSignature pilot activities, the options of interoperability levels and the common eSignature format. By defining and maintain-



ing the Technical memorandum, the EU4Digital Facility aims to empower the Eastern partner region to achieve cross-border mutual recognition of trust services.

The EU4Digital eSignature pilot activities will allow countries to test the early proof of concepts, and thus to increase the readiness for mutual recognition of digital trust services. The cross-border eSignature is one of the key enablers to extend the Digital Single Market to the Eastern Neighbourhood, and throughout the process EU4Digital experts will support countries to eliminate the barriers for interoperability of eSignature across borders.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

EU for Integrity: grants up to Euro40,000 for CSOs from Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

With the support of the European Union, the Open Government Partnership under the EU for Integrity programme has launched an ongoing call for project proposals for its members from the Eastern Partnership – registered civil society organisations and consortia from Armenia, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Applicants should focus on using the OGP platform for expanding civil society engagement and building cross-sectoral partnerships in the areas of in-

tegrity, anti-corruption, public service delivery, justice, COVID-19 response and recovery, and civic space.

Grants up to Euro40,000 will cover 4-12 months of the implementation period.

Unlike regular OGP competitions, this call for proposals does not have a specific due date. The proposals are reviewed quarterly.

The call is announced as part of the EU for Integrity Programme for the Eastern Partnership, funded by the EU and jointly implemented by the Open Government Partnership and the OECD Anti-Corruption Network.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

From growing saplings to harvesting grapes: EU and FAO conduct training for Georgian winemakers



Two dozen Georgian grapevine producers have taken part in a training recently held at several locations in Kakheti, a traditional winemaking region of Georgia.

The training was conducted by an expert from the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture with the support of the European Union and FAO in the framework of the EU4Business programme.

The learning sessions covered the entire vineyard cultivation process and the complete cycle of grapevine production from growing saplings to harvesting grapes, and included such topics as general management of various types of vineyards, planning of pruning, fertilisation, irrigation, organic grapevine production and Integrated Pest Management.

EU Innovative Action for Private Sector Competitiveness in Georgia is a joint initiative of the EU and four UN Agencies, which was launched in 2019 with a budget of Euro5 million. The project aims at enhancing entrepreneurship and business sophistication by strengthening the capacities of government and local entities.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, January 24

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 11°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 0°C

Tuesday, January 25

Day Cloudy

High: 7°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 0°C

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