

Georgia Receives EU membership Questionnaire

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

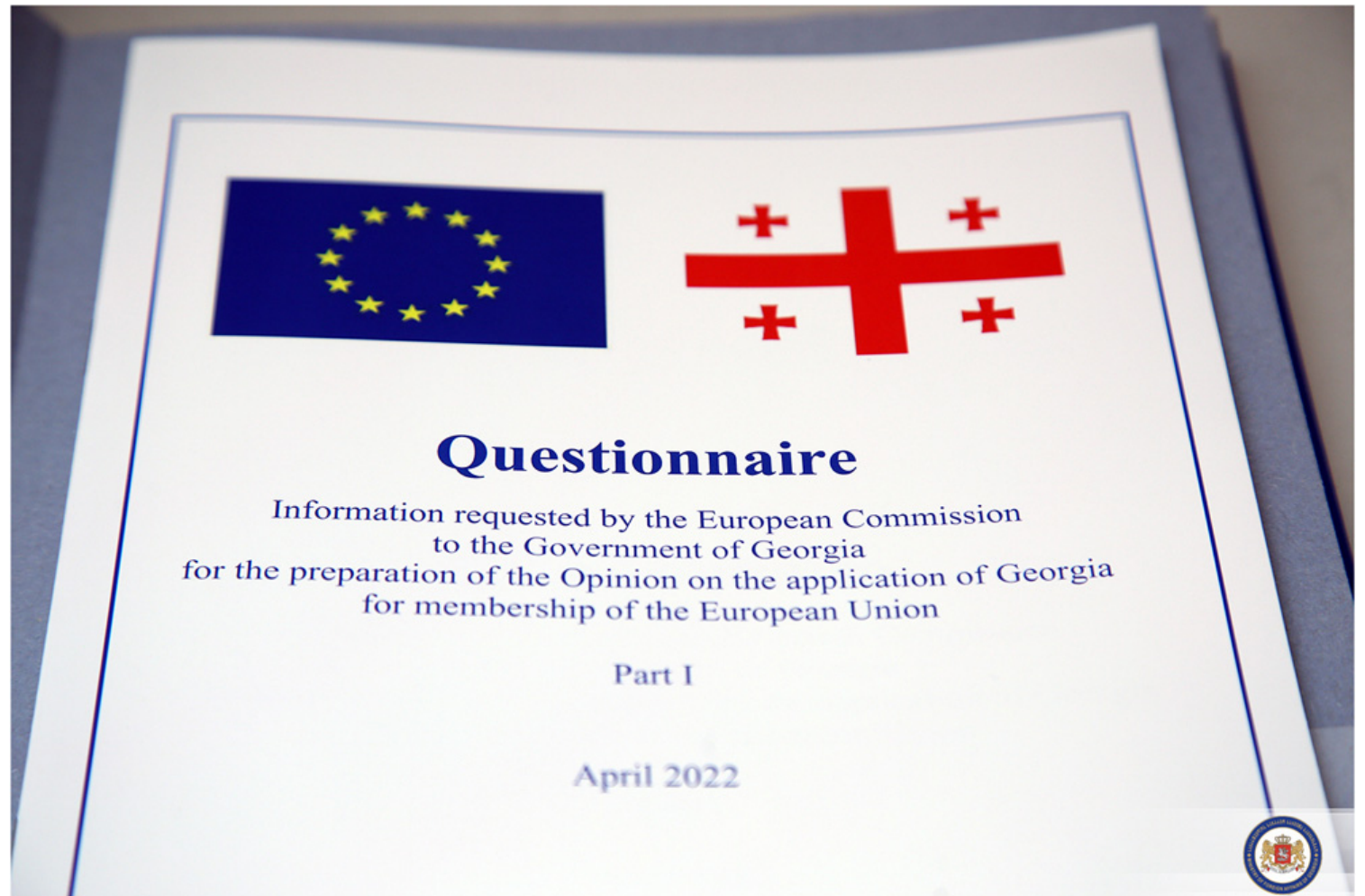
EU Commissioner for Neighborhood and Enlargement Oliver Varhelyi handed a questionnaire to newly appointed Georgian Foreign Minister Ilya Darchiashvili regarding the application for EU membership. The ceremony was held in Luxembourg. Together with Georgia, Moldova also received the same document.

"Georgia's irreversible process of integration into the European Union is entering a qualitatively new stage — the self-assessment questionnaire of Georgia's EU candidate status has been handed over," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

According to the Ministry, Georgia is given 1.5 months to complete the self-assessment questionnaire, and the final decision on granting Georgia the status of EU candidate is planned at a meeting of the EU Council scheduled for June this year. The questionnaire contains 369 questions, significantly less than the ones received by other EU partners. Previously, forms included about 2,000-5,000 questions for countries aspiring to join the Union. After the Georgian authorities fill out the questionnaire, the European Commission will prepare its report and forward it to the European Council.

"Georgia will 'spare no effort' to fill out the EU membership questionnaire and proceed to the next stages of the application process," Darchiashvili said on Monday.

According to him, by receiving the questionnaire the country had made "an-



other major step forward" on the path of EU integration.

On March 3, Georgia applied for EU membership. Earlier, Ukraine and Moldova announced their intention to join the EU following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

At a summit of EU leaders in France on March 10, the European Commission was asked to prepare an assessment of Georgia's application, on the basis of which it could be granted candidate status.

The questionnaire is an official docu-

ment of the European Commission, which is used by the EU to assess the country wishing to join the EU to be granted candidate status.

Meanwhile, the European Parliament delegation visited Tbilisi as well. During the meeting with PM Irakli Gharibashvili, sides discussed Georgia's official application for European Union membership and the European Parliament's support for the country.

Garibashvili told the visiting officials a working group had been set up after Georgian authorities received the EU membership questionnaire, a phase in the process of its membership bid, and the Government was 'mobilised' to send the completed questionnaire to Brussels as soon as possible.

According to the Government Administration, the meeting also involved remarks on Georgia as a reliable partner of the EU, with the sides also noting the EU-Georgia High-Level Strategic Security Dialogue remained an 'effective platform'.

The parties agreed on the importance of deepening Black Sea regional cooperation, including strengthening transport and communication links. The meeting also focused on the situation in the Russian-occupied territories of Georgia and the security challenges therein. Garibashvili noted Georgia was committed to its position that all conflicts on Georgia's territory should be resolved only through peaceful means. The security challenges created as a result of the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine were discussed. The PM highlighted Georgia's support for Ukraine in both political and humanitarian dimensions.



Varhelyi said the EU was ready to work with Georgia 'very fast' to deliver the Commission's opinion on the filled-out questionnaire to the European Council as requested.

Prices decreased by 60-70 % on More than 200 medicines, PM Says



According to the PM of Georgia, Irakli Garibashvili, price reduction on medication has been witnessed as Georgia gained exposure to the Turkish market.

“Our goal is to make the overall pharmaceutical industry most open, transparent, competitive, and fairly priced” said the Prime Minister of Georgia.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

The prices of about 200 medicines on the local market have decreased by 60-70 percent due to the launch of the Government initiative to import medications from Turkey, Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili announced on Monday.

According to him, one of the main challenges of the citizens

was the high medication prices, however, he noted that this issue is ‘almost dealt with’ as almost 200 medical treatments in high demand are now affordable.

“Our goal is to make the overall pharmaceutical industry most open, transparent, competitive, and fairly priced,” noted the Prime Minister of Georgia.

Garibashvili also said that starting Monday, prescribing

psychotropic medications would only be permitted in digital form, noting the step would “significantly restrict” misuse of such drugs. According to him, the digital prescription would insure the better monitoring of both pharmaceutical institutions and the doctors prescribing the drugs, and enable the government to ensure transparency of the process.

The PM also announced that starting Monday, medical doctors will be obliged to prescribe only generic medication, without specifying a brand of the drug. According to this reform, after the doctor prescribes a treatment, pharmacists will be obliged to offer the 3 cheapest medications from the approved list of generic treatments to customers.

As PM noted, with the intro-

duction of generic prescriptions, the practice of doctors and pharmacists lobbying individual brands, companies, or manufacturers through shadow marketing will be eradicated. This reform will also prevent artificial price increases of medicines. According to Garibashvili, the obligation to prescribe generic medication is practiced in every normal, civilized state.

By THE MESSENGER STAFF

Irakli Kobakhidze, Chairman of the Georgian Dream party, said that the ruling party had decided to send representatives of the parliamentary majority to Ukraine, but that there were ‘clear preconditions’ for a visit to the highest parliamentary level.

At a briefing at the party’s office, he listed several reasons which they claimed were ‘offensive steps’ by the Ukrainian authorities towards the Georgian state.

“There is a general readiness to pay a visit of the highest parliamentary level, but there are clear preconditions. You’re all aware of these preconditions.

Unfortunately, several offen-

Kobakhidze Says There Are ‘Clear Preconditions’ for High-Level Parliamentary Visit to Ukraine



sive steps have been taken by the Ukrainian authorities.

When there is an insult to the state, at such times, it is necessary to take a stand. This is related to the issue of recalling the ambassador. First, he was called for consultations, then he was fired. To this day, Ukraine remains in a state of demarche towards Georgia, so it turns out. We have not seen any different steps from the Ukrainian authorities since then - this situation can be changed.

Second - we have heard allegations of smuggling. Then, we heard softened statements from the Ukrainian authorities, but we agree that this is not enough. When such an accusation comes from the Ukrainian authorities, it needs to be properly confirmed or denied, which we have not heard. Consequently, this issue remains relevant.

The third and most fundamental issue - we think that the root

of all these problems is that people who are radical opposition leaders in Georgia are still represented in the Ukrainian government.

These are: Saakashvili, who is the head of the Reform Council, Adeishvili, the adviser to the Prosecutor General, Lortkipanidze, who is promoted to the position of Deputy Head of Counterintelligence, and, well, Arakhamia is the person who provides a direct link between these people and the Ukrainian government. This is an unfortunate reality,” Kobakhidze said.

Rada Chairman Ruslan Stefanchuk invited all parliamentarians, including Shalva Papuashvili, to enter Bucha. Shortly afterward, the chairman’s office made a statement that Papuashvili was working remotely due to his health condition, after which, Papuashvili called the invitation inappropriate.

Weather

Tuesday, April 12

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 19°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 5°C

Wednesday, April 13

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 10°C
Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 3°C

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