

EPP Urges Georgian Dream to Hospitalize Saakashvili, Says Gov't is Responsible for His Health



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The European People's Party is concerned about the health of former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, which according to them is the responsibility of the Georgian government, and calls on the Georgian Dream party to transfer him to an appropriate medical facility.

According to EPP, the Georgian government should recognize the seriousness of the situation. The party reminds the government that Saakashvili's treatment and possible deterioration in his health will be a litmus test for the Georgian

government's assessment of human rights and democratic aspirations. The European People's Party also condemns the Georgian government's attempts to defame the opposition, the ombudsman and civil society.

"The government of Georgia is responsible for the physical and mental health of the 3rd President of Georgia. This is not a matter of political choice, but a fundamental human right.

We condemn any defamatory attacks of ruling political leaders against the opposition, Public Defender, independent doctors and civil society. We urge the ruling Georgian Dream to acknowledge

the seriousness and gravity of the situation and the possible irreversible consequences. We call on those responsible to immediately transfer former President Saakashvili to an appropriate hospital in Georgia or abroad for humanitarian purposes where he can receive qualified treatment and rehabilitation.

The ill-treatment, invalidation or death of an ex-President will be a litmus test for the Georgian government in respecting fundamental human rights as well seen in the light of important European aspirations," the statement reads.

According to Saakashvili's family and lawyers, his condition is serious.

They demand the transfer of the third president abroad for medical treatment.

On April 27, a council of doctors set up by the ombudsman prepared another report on Mikheil Saakashvili's health. According to the report, Mikheil Saakashvili has protein hunger. According to the doctor, Saakashvili consumes about 1/4 of his daily calories. Doctors explain that the proteins that are not supplied to him receive these proteins through muscle breakdown, hence muscle mass is drastically reduced at this time. According to them, it may be caused by resistant post-traumatic stress disorder and depression, which eventually leads to anorexia or loss of appetite.

NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Georgia and Moldova are important partners of the United States, Says Spokesman Ned Price

According to US State Department spokesman Ned Price, Georgia and Moldova are important partners of the United States and the United States is committed to their sovereignty and territorial integrity. This statement was made by Ned Price at a briefing at the State Department, where he was asked by a journalist whether the United States is considering additional military assistance to Moldova and Georgia and whether the states see the imminent threat of new aggression against these countries.

"Both Georgia and Moldova are im-

portant partners of the United States. We are committed to their sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity. We have shown this commitment in many ways. As for Moldova, we talked about it on Tuesday. We recently started a strategic dialogue with our Moldovan counterparts. Secretary Blinken was in Chisinau a few days ago, where he met with the Moldovan leadership. It is a partnership that includes many different elements. We have provided significant assistance, in the amount of money or humanitarian assistance, to our Moldovan partners.

"Our military has an effective partnership, as I said, with regard to sovereignty, independence and the territorial integrity of Moldova and Georgia," Price said.

Asked whether he planned to hold talks with the Georgian side on the latest developments in the region and Russian aggression, Price said that the states have

constant contact with the US Embassy in Georgia and discussions on the issue are ongoing. "We have constant contact with the embassy, with partners in the region. This, of course, applies to our colleagues in Tbilisi. These discussions continue. We know that Vladimir Putin may have aspirations for aggression against other countries in the region, but so has US assistance to Ukraine."

"It shows the response of Washington and that the United States and its allies will not tolerate such actions," said Ned Price.

US ambassador Kelly Degnan calls on the government to take the ombudsman's recommendations seriously

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degnan calls on the Georgian government to take the ombudsman's

recommendations seriously regarding the health of former President Mikheil Saakashvili, adding that they have full confidence in the ombudsman's recommendations.

"We are closely monitoring the health condition of Mikheil Saakashvili, we have called for him to be seen by qualified professional doctors and also for appropriate treatment by doctors of the relevant profile."

We have full confidence in the ombudsman's recommendations and we call on the government to take the ombudsman's recommendations seriously, because the ombudsman's office has a constitutional mandate to protect the rights of every citizen in Georgia, and we believe it is the appropriate body to do its job well. Therefore, it would be good if their recommendations are taken into account," said the US ambassador.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.0384 | EURO - 3.1982 | GBP - 3.8029 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 4.5346 | SWISS FRANC - 3.0954 |

Georgia Needs Faster, More Reliable Way to Integrate into EU, NATO, President Zourabichvili Says



► Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili.

was being 'realistic' about what it could do for Ukraine at this stage of the war, adding that 'Ukrainians sometimes are asking more and more from their partners'.

"Ukrainians would like to receive arms from Georgia, to have Georgia opening a second front. All of that is not possible. The government is just more realistic about what Georgia can do at this stage, having two occupied territories, one of which is now talking about a referendum to join Russia. So clearly, we have to be careful because we don't have many means, and nobody would be ready to support Georgia in the same way. But that does not change the level of solidarity that we have", the President said.

Zourabichvili said that Georgia is fully applying sanctions, stressing that the consequences of this action have been already seen in the Georgian economy. She clarified that the Georgian Government is not adding to the existing sanctions, "which we are complying with, and sometimes overly".

"We're not adding national sanctions. We do not know very well what would be the additional national sanctions that Georgia could inflict upon Russia," Zourabichvili said.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili told Deutsche Welle on Wednesday that Georgia needs a 'quick and sure path' toward integration into the EU and NATO, stressing that this is the path where the country sees its 'ultimate security'. President believes that Georgia's security could not be a war, "because we can never win a war with Russia".

To the question: "If the European countries had acted sooner, some of the events could be prevented in the region" Zourabichvili said that she would not like to change the weight of responsibility from one side to the other, stressing that only Russia is responsible for the events.

"Yes, the European countries and the United States could have done more, could have been more vigilant, could have been more clear about what was the nature of Russia, but they are further away than we are. They don't have the same experience. And that doesn't change the fact that there is the only one responsible and that is Russia," Zourabichvili told DW.

The Georgian President said in the interview that the Georgian Government



► President Zourabichvili said that the Georgian Government was being 'realistic' about what it could do for Ukraine at this stage of the war.

FRIDAY		MAY 6	
Day		Showers	High: 20°C
Night		Rain	Low: 11°C
SATURDAY		MAY 7	
Day		Showers	High: 14°C
Night		Rain	Low: 9°C

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Georgia Participates in Ukraine Donors' Conference

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Poland is hosting an international high-level donors' conference for Ukraine. The International Donors' Conference for Ukraine is co-hosted by the prime ministers of Poland and Sweden in partnership with the Presidents of the Council of Europe and the European Commission.

The conference was addressed by the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen.

In his address, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili thanked "Georgia's faithful partners on the path to European and Euro-Atlantic integration" and condemned Russia's full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, which "clearly and grossly violates the fundamental principles and norms of international law and the UN Charter."

Gharibashvili emphasized that the aftermath of the war in Ukraine defines the future architecture of European security and lays the foundation for a new security framework in our region and beyond. The war in Ukraine has sparked a severe humanitarian crisis in the region that "calls for the international community's immediate action."

"My government expresses unconditional solidarity with the Ukrainian people. We have mobilized all our resources to mitigate the consequences of this devastating war. We stand firmly by the international community and express our full solidarity with Ukraine. We will continue to support Ukraine both politically and practically, in bilateral and multilateral formats," he said.



According to the PM, Georgia's contribution to international support for Ukraine amid Russia's invasion of the country is valued at \$7 million, with the country continuing to provide assistance to more than 28,000 Ukrainians affected by the war and currently located in Georgia.

"More than 5,000 tons of humanitarian cargo have been sent to Ukraine by air and land. My Government has been supportive to the displaced people from

Ukraine through provision of accommodation, essential items, clothing, food, vital medical services, access to schools and kindergartens free of charge," the Georgian PM said.

Gharibashvili also highlighted his Government would continue to support the Ukrainian people with an additional \$7 million by the end of 2022, and mentioned Georgian non-governmental organisations and individual citizens

were also offering accommodation, food, clothing and other assistance to Ukrainians in Georgia. The PM ended his speech reiterating that the unity of the international community in relation to active assistance to Ukraine is an urgent and necessary issue.

The head of the Georgian government will also participate in a charity session planned within the framework of the conference.

Georgia's Application for EU Membership: EU Questions are Known, Georgian Gov't Answers Are Not

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

The Government of Georgia has partially completed the EU Questionnaire on Accession and will answer all the questions in the near future, but the answers provided by the decision of the Government of Georgia remain unknown to the public.

The dramatic events in Ukraine, Saakashvili's deteriorating health, the publication of Bidzina Ivanishvili's telephone conversations, and all the related news streams have pushed back relatively and partially overshadowed a strategically important issue for Georgia - the start of the EU accession process.

Opinion polls show that the majority of Georgians support EU membership (according to recent polls, 88% of Georgians support EU membership). According to President Salome Zurbishvili, EU membership is the "greatest hope" of the Georgian people.

If it turns out that the government did not do everything to make Georgia join the European Union and the process was delayed because of it, it will lead to great public dissatisfaction. The Georgian government is not in a good position to apply for EU membership. Georgia is no

longer a 'beacon of democracy' in the region, Georgia's democracy is deteriorating from year to year in various international rankings, the Georgian Dream has refused to fulfill the agreement reached through the mediation of Council President Charles Michel Reform and steps were taken to establish an independent judiciary. Georgia's application for EU membership would be in a much better position if the Charles Michel agreement were not rejected, but if there was a dialogue between the government and the opposition on its implementation. However, the reality is different and the situation in Georgian politics is sharply polarized. The pro-Western opposition believes that the Georgian Dream is not taking the issue of EU membership seriously, because if the reforms envisaged by the Charles Michel document and the European Union are required, a change of government in Georgia will be inevitable.

Georgia and Moldova received an EU Questionnaire on April 11. The first part of the Georgian questionnaire, a 42-page document consisting of 369 questions, was completed on May 2 and was personally handed over by the Prime Minister Irakli

Gharibashvili to EU Ambassador Carl Hartzel. "It was a very time-consuming job and we completed it successfully," Gharibashvili said. The second part of the questionnaire is a 239-page document that is much longer and includes 2300 questions. The Government of Georgia will complete the second part by May 13. The first part of the EU questionnaire was published by the Government of Georgia on April 15, and the second part on April 29.

But it is not expedient to make the answers public by the decision of the Georgian government. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Iliia Darchiashvili stated about it. "There are issues in the answers that should not be made public," Darchiashvili said. This answer did not satisfy the active part of the society.

On May 2, 30 NGOs said that public information could only be kept confidential if it constituted a professional, personal, commercial or state secret. If the document provided to the EU contains this kind of information, this part should be encrypted and the rest should be made public.

According to non-governmental organizations, the government should ensure

transparency, openness and involvement of stakeholders in the process. NGOs and the opposition suggested that the government involve them in answering the questionnaire, but the Georgian Dream government filled out the questionnaire alone and, as already mentioned, did not intend to make the answers public. The position of the Georgian government is unlikely to change. The NGOs were also disappointed with the response of the head of the EU Delegation to Georgia, who said on May 3 that it was up to the government to make the answers public.

The procedure for completing the questionnaire and granting candidate status takes years. The current government of Georgia, as already mentioned, was waiting for the application to be submitted in 2024, and the candidate status in 2030. However, this time the process is accelerated due to the current events in Ukraine.

Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have been given a month to complete the questionnaire, and the European Commission's assessment is expected to be ready in June. This assessment, according to Carl Hartzel, will be public. The reaction of the society will depend on the response of the European Union.