

Georgian Dream Attitude towards EU Integration Process is Unconstitutional, NGOs Say



By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

18 NGOs are responding to a resolution adopted by the European Parliament in response to statements made by Irakli Gharibashvili about EU candidate status and Georgia's possible refusal. Ac-

ording to the non-governmental organizations, the attitude of the Georgian Dream government toward the European integration process of Georgia is unconstitutional and threatens the European choice of the country's population.

"We believe that such irresponsible and

dangerous statements not only severely damage the country's European integration process and contradict the Georgian constitution, but also seriously jeopardize the European elections announced by the vast majority of the Georgian population," the statement reads.

Eighteen NGOs say that since EU candidate status is a mandatory step in a country's membership in the bloc, Prime Minister Gharibashvili's denial of status and its symbolism poses a "serious threat to the Eurosceptic attitude" and directly responds to Georgia's rhetoric about the EU.

Personal Data Protection Service: We'll Study Data Protection Measures of Diplomats

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Personal Data Protection Service has announced the discovery of files containing the personal information of members of the diplomatic corps in the public space, saying that the Service has begun to study the measures taken to ensure the security of personal data.

According to the service, the Ministry of Internal Affairs received information about the possible access of documents containing personal data to other persons.

The Personal Data Protection Service states that if the inspection reveals signs of a possible crime, the service will immediately provide information to the public and the relevant investigative body.

Thousands of leaflets containing the personal data of diplomats accredited in Georgia, including telephone numbers and bank transfers, were found on the streets of Tbilisi.



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.9622; Euro - 3.1382; GBP - 3.6865; 100 Russian Ruble - 5.0877; Swiss Franc - 3.0183

Russian Aggression and the West: What to Learn From Past Mistakes?

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Since the start of the Russia-Ukraine war, Western politicians have made statements that many mistakes have been made in the past, leaving the Putin regime's aggression against post-Soviet countries unpunished and encouraging new, larger-scale aggression.

The only question now is how firm the West will be in defending the countries that Putin is trying to swallow today. Today, Ukraine is the first on Putin's list, followed by Georgia and Moldova.

Former NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen recently spoke to Foreign Policy about the Alliance's mistakes in Georgia and Ukraine. The list of mistakes starts with the 2008 NATO Bucharest Summit when NATO decided to make Georgia and Ukraine members of the Alliance, but did not give them a Membership Action Plan (MAP).

Putin concluded that the West would not attack Ukraine and Georgia, and in August 2008 attacked Georgia. This aggression was eventually stopped by the US reaction and the resistance of the Georgian army, but Putin's direct occupation of Georgian territories and the non-fulfillment of the August 11 agreement cost him virtually nothing. Russian propaganda was also spread in the West, leading some to believe that the war was caused by escalation and that the Georgian government Mikheil



Saakashvili could have apparently avoided the Russian attack. As, for example, Poland could have avoided Hitler's attack in 1939.

Rasmussen considers the West's insufficient reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 as a mistake. The light sanctions imposed by the West reaffirmed Putin's belief that he could continue his aggression. "We made a lot of mistakes and we were naive for a very long time," Rasmussen said.

However, if we talk about the mistakes made by the West, which led to the encouragement of Russian aggression, we

should start with an earlier period.

From the time when the Soviet Union was declared collapsed and many were delighted that the disintegration of the Soviet Union, this huge nuclear state, took place peacefully, unlike that of Yugoslavia.

Under Yeltsin, who used the image of a 'democratic' politician in the West, Russia waged an undeclared war against Georgia in the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia. Russian special services in Georgia encouraged separatists, armed them, and sent North Caucasians and Cossacks to Georgia to fight. The

Russian military was directly involved in the hostilities.

Georgians even managed to shoot down a Russian plane near Sokhumi, and Shevardnadze took journalists to show the world the Russian stars painted on the plane. He then sent appeals from besieged Sokhumi to Western leaders, but to no avail.

No one complained about Georgia then, turning a blind eye to a number of "undemocratic" actions by Yeltsin seemed to be a good solution. The Caucasus was then considered Russia's "backyard" and whatever was not forgiven to the Baltic republics remained "unnoticed" in the

Caucasus. Russia was also forgiven for drowning in Chechen blood. This was Putin's first victory, thus starting his ascent.

The "peaceful" dissolution of the Soviet Union was gratifying to the West, but Putin called it a "mistake" and a "geopolitical catastrophe" and aimed to restore the Soviet Union. Blood is now being shed abundantly in Ukraine. Putin is now far more powerful than Russia in the early 1990s, and the "bloodless" disintegration of the Soviet Union turned into a bloody attempt to restore it. Looking back today, Russia's policy of intimidation and inadequate response to aggression has led to even greater aggression by Putin.

Rasmussen considers the decision made by NATO in 2008 a mistake, but not everyone considers this decision a mistake, for example, former German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Judging the mistakes of the past is useful for current policies only if we draw some conclusions.

The Russian army, albeit with difficulty, is advancing in Ukraine, and Western support has so far failed to help Ukraine stop the Russian army. Ukraine needs more help, and Putin will not stop there if he wins in Ukraine.

We have already talked about the decision of NATO in 2008, now the European Union will have to decide on granting candidate status to Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.

There may be many arguments that these countries, or any of them, do not deserve this status, but if the EU 'abstains' here and does not receive candidate status from any of the named countries, even with many conditions, Putin will consider it a victory.

Borrell: if Georgia is serious about its European path, there can be no room for politicised justice

EU High Representative Josep Borrell yesterday shared his concern about the independence and impartiality of the Georgian judiciary and called on Georgian authorities to ensure freedom of expression in Georgia.

In his speech, delivered at the

European Parliament by the Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, Borrell noted that the verdict against Nika Gvaramia, the owner and director of pro-opposition news channel Mtavari TV, sentenced recently to three-and-a-half years in prison, comes against the backdrop of repeated calls by the EU to further reform the judiciary, in order to instil trust and increase its independence – "a longstanding commitment by the Georgian authorities".

"The Commission has been very clear on this point: if Georgia is serious about its European path, there can be no room for politicised justice and no room for violations of media freedoms," said Borrell. "We note with concern an increasing number of episodes of violence against journalists in Georgia. Violence and

intimidation are never acceptable."

He also stressed that the EU remains a close friend and partner to Georgia and firmly engaged to further deepen EU-Georgia relations.

EU: new amendments, adopted on 7 June by the Georgian Parliament, significantly reduce Georgian citizens' right to privacy

New amendments adopted on 7 June by the Georgian Parliament significantly reduce Georgian citizens' right to privacy, EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell has said.

The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia increase the scope of crimes allowing for covert investigative actions and the duration of these actions.

"While amending the Criminal Procedure Code may be legitimate on security grounds, we note with concern that the current amendments significantly reduce Georgian citizens' right to privacy, without providing sufficient safeguards against unjustified intrusion into their private lives and the protection of their personal data," said Hartzell.

He reminded that the EU had expressed these concerns to the Georgian Parliament prior to the adoption of these amendments, suggesting that the new legislation be sent to the Venice Commission before finalisation, to

assess its compliance with European standards and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.

Hartzell added the EU regretted that the Georgian Parliament had decided to proceed with the adoption of this legislation without such consultation and called on the Parliament to immediately ask the Venice Commission for an Opinion on this piece of legislation and to follow its recommendations.

"We urge the Georgian Government to uphold its commitments to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of Georgian citizens, as well as to ensure adequate and effective safeguards against their potential abuse," said Hartzell.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, June 13

Day T-storm
High: 30°C

Night T-storm
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, June 14

Day T-storm
High: 28°C

Night T-storm
Low: 18°C

published by
The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi,
0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof.

Zaza Gachechiladze

Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
<http://www.messenger.com.ge/>

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact.

All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements.

The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.