

## European Parliament Committee Discusses Draft of Critical Report on Georgia

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

On July 13, at the meeting of the Foreign Relations Committee of the European Parliament, the MEPs discussed the draft annual report on Georgia's implementation of the EU Association Agreement, which should be the basis for the European Parliament's resolution.

As the author of the report, rapporteur on Georgian issues, Estonian MEP Sven Mikser (Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats) said, the report is largely based on the European Commission's assessments, which followed Georgia's application for EU membership.

According to Mikser, the draft report welcomes the European Commission's granting of a European perspective to Georgia, however, in order to obtain EU candidate status, "Georgia must successfully fulfill the main priorities outlined in the European Commission's perspective."

"The project calls on the authorities of Georgia to protect the highest standards of democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms; To firmly start the implementation of the priorities of the reforms outlined in the European Commission's point of view, in order to show a strong political will to implement ambitious European aspirations," Mikser said.

At the committee meeting, the MEP also drew attention to the challenge of 'deep polarization' that characterizes Georgia's political environment and pointed out that 'the project reiterates that the main provisions of the agreement of April 19, 2021, reached through the mediation of the European Union, are still a guide for strengthening democracy and the rule of law in Georgia'.

According to Mikser, the text of the report also talks about the need to implement real judicial reform 'based on a transparent and effective judicial reform strategy after 2021' and 'calls on the authorities to correct the shortcomings identified by the Venice Commission in the selection and appoint-



ment of judges at all levels, including the Prosecutor General'. The author of the report also notes that further reforms are needed in the Supreme Council of Justice. The MEPs speaking at the session of the Foreign Relations Committee stated that the political spectrum of Georgia now faces an important task and it is necessary to implement the reforms with united forces and quickly, which are related to the recommendations recorded by the European Commission and approved by the European Council of the European Union.

At the meeting, the sad tendency of Georgia's democratic decline and the desire of the Europeans to help the country to fulfill the recommendations by the end of the year, before the further assessment of the European Commission, were noted.

Lithuanian MEP Rasa Juknevičienė said that Georgia is a 'hostage of one person' and has an oligarch in the form of Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of 'Georgian Dream'.

"If 'Georgian Dream' does not understand what de-oligarchization is, which is

mentioned in the recommendation of the European Commission, I will help them to understand: it means De-Bidzina-sation of Georgia, or De-Ivanishvili-sation... In the parliament, we approved a resolution that mentioned sanctions. We must not stop pushing this issue forward and thinking about it. Also, I am drawing the attention of the European Commission and other institutions to our resolution," said European People's Party (EPP) MEP.

German MEP, Michael Galler (EPP) called sarcastic the statement made by "Georgian Dream" chairman Irakli Kobakhidze that if a war starts in Georgia in December, the country will receive the status of a candidate for EU membership.

MEP Mikser said during his speech at the committee meeting, the text needs to be completed, and it will be possible after the delegation of MEPs arrives in Georgia next week, within the framework of the planned tour to the South Caucasus countries. September 8, 2022 was set as the deadline for submitting amendments to the European Parliament resolution.

The European Commission will probably prepare a report on the fulfillment of the 12 criteria defined for Georgia by October 2023. Representative of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG-NEAR), Michael Rupp said that the European Commission will prepare a report 'by 2023' on how the country fulfills the European Commission's 12 recommendations, – instead of December 2022, as previously defined. He did not specify the specific date of 2023. "After careful discussions, we decided that we should not rush the Georgian political elite to depoliticize the country, to sit down at the common table to work on reforms in depth. So, as requested by the European Council, we will prepare a report on how the priorities outlined in the enlargement package are being met by 2023. This will give the political system of Georgia enough time to work in depth on the mentioned priorities," he said.

Recall that based on the recommendation of the European Commission, on June 24, 2022, the European Council made a final decision, granting Ukraine and Moldova candidate status, Georgia - European perspective; In addition, the European Council stated that Georgia, after fulfilling the 12 priorities defined by the European Commission, will also be granted the candidate status.

The European Commission initially named December 2022 as the deadline for the implementation of the 12 priorities - it indicated that the European Commission 'will monitor Georgia's progress in the process of implementing these priorities and will make a report by the end of 2022'.

A meeting of the Georgia-EU Association Council is scheduled for September 6. And as a representative of the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy Service (EEAS), said in the European Parliament, the EEAS and the Commission will publish a report on the implementation of the Association Agreement by the end of August.

## Lelo Makes a Statement About Georgia Being Denied EU Candidate Status

By MESSENGER STAFF

Lelo said in a statement that the European Union's decision to postpone the evaluation is a clear indicator that Georgia would not be granted candidate status under the oligarchic regime of Ivanishvili.

Focusing on the correct and timely implementation of the 12 principles, according to Lelo, is essential. With this in mind, the party is in favor of calling an extra session of Parliament.

"Today, it was confirmed once again that the Georgian Dream government lost Georgia's historic opportunity to obtain EU candidate status, which led to the postponement of the decision for an indefinite period. Instead of the Georgian authorities making every effort

to use the unique historical moment to return to the Charles Michel agreement and implement all critical reforms on time, the authorities continued to deepen polarization, attack political opponents, and produce aggressive rhetoric towards Euro-Atlantic political structures.

As a result, Georgia's partners did not see in the ruling team either the desire or the ability to carry out the necessary reforms for EU membership candidacy. This is what caused the issue of Georgia's candidacy to be delayed and postponed for an indefinite period. Moreover, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament made it quite clear at today's hearing that under the conditions of the current government and the oligarchy, which, despite calls for years, refused to carry out critical reforms, Georgia would

not be able to receive the candidate status in December.

Inasmuch as the pro-European choice of the absolute majority of the population of Georgia is important for our partners, the implementation of which is hindered by the incompetent, harmful course of the Georgian Dream anti-European government, the European Union has postponed the review of the issue to prevent Georgia from being denied candidate status once again. This is another completely direct indication that Georgia will not be able to receive EU candidate status under Ivanishvili's oligarchic government.

In this situation, Lelo believes that we should concentrate on the proper and timely implementation of the 12 points provided by the European Union.

It is for this purpose that Lelo for Ge-



orgia supports the extraordinary session of the Parliament for the immediate implementation of 12 points of the European Commission," Lelo said in a statement.

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# Boycotting Not Leading to Depolarization, Czech Ambassador Says on Opposition



► Petr Mikyska, the Ambassador of Czechia to Georgia.



► The Parliamentary working group created to review judicial reforms for fulfilling conditions outlined by the European Union for granting Georgia the membership candidate status held its first meeting on Monday.

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Petr Mikyska, the Ambassador of Czechia to Georgia, told local media outlet Interpressnews in an interview that the decision of the Georgian opposition to boycott the working groups proposed by the ruling Georgian Dream party to fulfill the European Union membership status conditions is a mistake.

According to the ambassador, all political forces and civil society in Georgia should discuss the setup for the next steps

to improve the domestic political field, and only then proceed with the moves.

"I consider it [boycotting] an error. As I said, there must be a constructive approach of all political parties, of all political forces...First, in my opinion, all political forces and civil society should meet, should discuss how will be the setup for the next steps and only then proceed. Preconditions, boycotting, and so on is a clear error which is not leading to depolarization", he told Interpressnews. The Ambassador also added that depolarization was possible in

case there was "relevant will" from political forces in the country, and added that every step in the European integration direction should be made in a consensus and be discussed between all political parties and with the civil society.

"All forces, the government, and the opposition and civil society should realize that they have to meet constructively, that they have to discuss in a civilized manner, without insults, without claims, without preconditions, and only in this way the depolarization can be reached. It's not just

for the sake of the candidate status, it's for the sake of normal civilized development of this country," said the Ambassador.

The Parliamentary working group created to review judicial reforms for fulfilling conditions outlined by the European Union for granting Georgia the membership candidate status held its first meeting on Monday. Some opposition parties rebuffed to join the meeting citing a 'lack of confidence' in the ruling party and demanding "concrete compromise steps" to be included in the process.

## Awarding Ceremony of the Human Rights Prize of the Embassy "Empowering women in crisis situations"



The Human Rights Prize of the French Embassy in Georgia was created to reward local organizations working for the protection and promotion of human rights. France wishes to show its support to the defenders of fundamental rights in Georgia.

This year, the French Embassy in Georgia has chosen to dedicate the 2022 edition of its Human Rights Prize to projects that empower women in the face of crisis situations, whether climatic, environmental, economic, social or conflict related.

Crisis situations particularly affect wo-



men and girls, who are victims of increased gender-based and sexual violence and lack of access to health services. It is crucial to empower women, increase their capacity to act and to endorse higher responsibility to overcome barriers and obstacles to the implementation of livelihood strategies adapted to political, economic, and environmental challenges.

The French Embassy is pleased to announce the awarding ceremony of the sixth edition of its Human Rights Prize, which will be accompanied with a prize of 2000 euros.

This event is part of the National Day celebrations and takes place one year after the launch of the Generation Equality Forum, which meaningfully highlights the coordinated action of France with its European and Georgian partners to work together for gender equality in Georgia.

The Prize was awarded to Association "Merkuri".

**THURSDAY JULY 14**  
 Day Sunny High: 35°C  
 Night Clear Low: 20°C

**FRIDAY JULY 15**  
 Day Sunny High: 36°C  
 Night Clear Low: 23°C

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