

Media coalition addresses Charles Michel on Nika Gvaramia's case

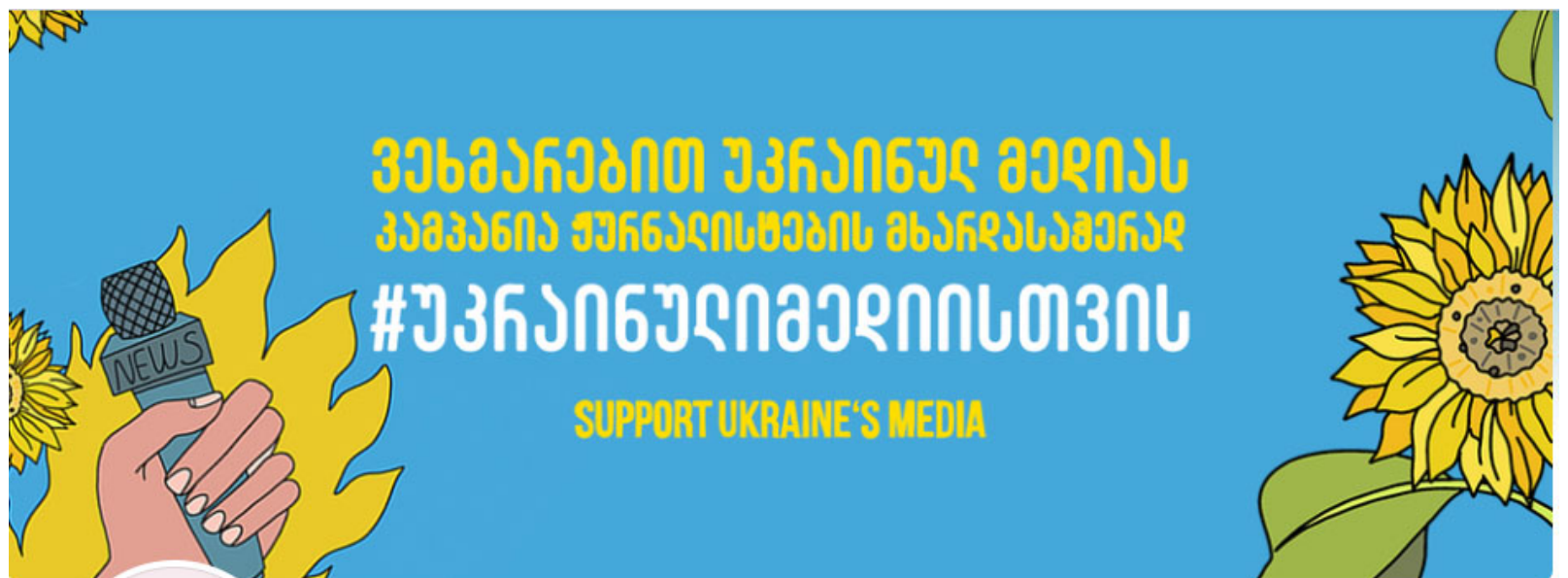
By Liza Mchedlidze

The Media Advocacy Coalition appealed to the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, on the case of Nika Gvaramia, director of the "Mtavari Channel". The signatories ask Charles Michel to lobby Salome Zourabichvili because they believe that Michel's appeal might influence her to make a 'humane' step and pardon Nika Gvaramia.

"On November 2, 2022, the Tbilisi Court of Appeals left Nika Gvaramia, the founder and director of the independent TV company "Mtavari Channel" in prison. In our deep belief, this is a politically motivated case, and the allegations against him are baseless. This was indicated by the independent opinions presented to the court by the Public Defender of Georgia and non-governmental organizations.

We think that Nika Gvaramia is a prisoner today only because he is a loud critic of the government and has a great influence on the formation of public opinion. The TV company "Mtavari" created by him, along with other TV companies, is a constant object of attack and harassment from the government.

We think that arresting Nika Gvaramia for political reasons is a huge obstacle on the path of Georgia's European integration. The resolution adopted by the



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European Parliament on the freedom of the media and the safety of journalists in Georgia also unequivocally condemns the fact of his arrest and calls on the Georgian authorities to carry out real reforms.

Against the backdrop of severe challenges in the Georgian judicial system and taking into ac-

count the aggressive policy of "Georgian Dream" towards critical media, we do not expect that Nika Gvaramia's rights will be protected in the Supreme Court. The only way to prevent his unjust imprisonment is to pardon Nika Gvaramia by the president. Several public and political groups have already addressed

this request to the President of Georgia.

We think that your appeal, as a loyal supporter of the democratic development of Georgia, may make the President of Georgia, Mrs. Salome Zourabichvili, take a humane and important step for the country, pardon the director of the critical media and

release the political prisoner from prison.

Mr. Michel, your petition will make a serious contribution to the protection of freedom of speech in Georgia and will add strength to the aspiration of the Georgian people towards Europe."

MEPs' amendments to the annual report discuss sanctioning of Ivanishvili, free media and anti-west rhetoric

By Liza Mchedlidze

The MEPs came out with the initiative of amendments in the annual report on the implementation of the Association Agreement of Georgia with the European Union.

According to the amendment document, one of the important issues is the sanctioning of Bidzina Ivanishvili by the West, which is mentioned 12 times in the amendment document.

It also talks about attacks on the owners of critical media outlets and mentions the general director of the main channel Nika Gvaramia, the founder of Formula Davit Kezerashvili, and the owners and directors of TV Pirveli: Avtandil Tsereteli and Vato Tsereteli.

In the text of the amendment, the arguments for imposing sanctions on Ivanishvili are different, and in some cases, it is related to the Russian war in Ukraine and its support by Georgia, specifically Ivanishvili.

Data published by the national website of Ukraine are



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7340; Euro - 2.7304; GBP - 3.1280; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.4551; Swiss Franc - 2.7599

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MEPs' amendments to the annual report discuss sanctioning of Ivanishvili, free media and anti-west rhetoric

cited in the arguments, according to which sanctions should be imposed on Ivanishvili and his close entourage.

In the text of the amendments, one of the European parliamentarians, Anna Fotiga, requests that in case of confirmation of the allegations about possible connections with Russia, personal sanctions should be imposed on Ivanishvili and his associates.

"The European Parliament is concerned about reports that Russian people and entities are alleg-

edly using Georgia to circumvent Western sanctions. It calls on EU institutions to look into these allegations, in particular various reports, including a report by the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption of Ukraine, on Bidzina Ivanishvili's possible ties to Russia.

If these accusations are confirmed, it demands the imposition of personal sanctions against Bidzina Ivanishvili and her associates," the text of Fotiga's amendments reads.

MEP Andrews Kubilius stated that Bidzina Ivanishvili is the only Georgian oligarch who has

excessive influence on Georgian politics, economy, and public life. "The European Parliament emphasizes the need to eliminate the excessive influence of vested interests on the politics, economy, and public life of Georgia by the country's only oligarch, Bidzina Ivanishvili,"

Kubilius's amendment states. The amendment document also talked about anti-Western rhetoric, which is often used by the representatives of the Georgian government. Also, one of the extensive parts is dedicated to the Georgian media and the deteriorating situation.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

IRI: If Georgia fails to receive EU candidate status, 64% consider government responsible

According to the public opinion survey of the International Republican Institute (IRI), 64% of the surveyed population say that if Georgia does not get the EU candidate status, the government/ruling party will be responsible for it.

According to the survey, 8% blame the opposition, 6% - the European Union, 2% the Russian war in Ukraine, and 1% the civil society. 3% say that the reason is different, and 17% do not have an answer to the question. It should be noted that if Georgia fails to receive the status of a candidate, the responsibility for this will be imposed on the government by the voters of the Georgian Dream - 50%.

To the question of whether Georgia will fulfill the 12 recommendations issued by the European Union, the population answered as follows: 55% think that the country will fully or partially fulfill the recommendations, while 37% think that Georgia will not be able to fulfill the recommendations. 8% have no answer to the question.

According to the same research, a total of 37% of respondents think that Georgia will receive the status of a candidate



for the European Union by 2023, while 50% think that it will not happen. 13% have no answer to the question.

The study commissioned by IRI was conducted in the period from September 13 to October 2, 2022.

IRI: 78% do not favor visa-free regime for Russian citizens, business/property registration

According to the public opinion survey of the International Republican Institute (IRI), 78% of the surveyed population is not

in favor of a visa-free regime for Russian citizens, businesses or property registration.

According to the survey, 14% say that the visa regime should not be abolished for Russian citizens, 8% think that they should not have the right to register a business, and 5% do not favor Russian citizens' right to register property. 4% have no answer to the question.

According to the voters of the political parties, 91% of the voters of the National Movement and 64% of the Georgian Dream are against the visa-free regime for Russian citizens, business or property registration.

The Power of Words

UK and UNDP bring Georgian and Ossetian scholars together to celebrate Caucasian culture through the ages

TBILISI. 2 November 2022 – Melancholy verses by Nikoloz Baratashvili, rebellious poems by Kosta Khetagurov, the beauty of folk songs, and the wisdom of medieval epos – this wealth of poetry and folklore is now available in Georgian and Ossetian languages thanks to the joint work of scholars in Tbilisi and Tskhinvali.

An impressive collection of books was presented to the public on 2 November at an artistic event "The Power of Words" organised by the civil society organization "Caucasian Mosaic" with support from the United Kingdom (UK) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). A set of publications includes:

Anthologies of Georgian and Ossetian poetry with over 380 poems translated into both

languages, Illustrated Georgian-Ossetian and Ossetian-Georgian dictionaries for children with more than 300 words, and

A research paper on the role of women in Caucasian folklore.

At the event, H.E. **Mark Clayton**, British Ambassador to Georgia, and **Nick Beresford**, UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia, addressed the audience with welcome remarks. "Caucasian Mosaic" representatives **Naira Bepievi** and **Nino Popiashvili** presented the joint work of Georgian and Ossetian researchers. Well-known actors **Lili Khuriti** and **Tinatin Kobaladze** recited immortal stanzas by Shota Rustaveli and a beautiful poem allegedly written by the 11th-century Georgian Queen Borena who by birth be-

longed to the Ossetian royal family.

"The UK is proud to support Georgian and Ossetian scholars in their joint effort to study the historic and cultural heritage of the Caucasus and introduce it to young people," Ambassador Clayton said.

"Through our languages, literature and poetry we celebrate the beauty and diversity of our heritage. At UNDP, we are proud to work with the UK Government to support scholars and researchers to preserve and popularize the treasures of Georgian and Ossetian literature," noted Nick Beresford, UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia.

Along with its historic and cultural value, the joint work of Georgian and Ossetian researchers marks a 10-year-long collaboration focused on the history and culture of the Caucasus. The partnership produced Georgian and Ossetian editions of the ancient "Nart Sagas" mythology collection; Georgian-Ossetian and Ossetian-Georgian dictionaries with over 22,000 words

explained, translated and commented on by linguists; an encyclopaedic album summarizing Georgian-Ossetian relations before the 19th century; and theatrical performances in Georgian and Ossetian.

The team of experts on Caucasian languages, history, literature and folklore brought together by "Caucasian Mosaic" was supported by the European Union (EU), the UK and UNDP through their Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM).

Designed to build confidence between conflict-divided communities, COBERM works with civil society organizations on all sides of the conflict to address some key confidence-building areas, such as healthcare, youth education, people-centred diplomacy, cultural cooperation, minority rights, gender equality, and environmental protection. Since its start in 2010, COBERM has supported over 200 initiatives, contributing to developing new approaches to peace and confidence building.

Weather

Tuesday, November 8

Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 9°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 2°C

Wednesday, November 9

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 13°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 4°C

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