

President Zourabichvili did not attend Ambassadors' Conference due to 'gross violation of diplomatic protocol', Administration says

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili did not attend the Ambassadors' Conference 2022 held at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Based on previously published information, the President, Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Chairman of the Parliament were invited to the event.

According to the president's administration, the reason Salome Zourabichvili did not attend the conference of ambassadors is that she was not given the place stipulated by the protocol. Administration assessed this as a "gross violation of diplomatic protocol" in their press release.

"The conference of ambassadors was opened today. The President of Georgia welcomes the participants of the ambassadorial, thanks the diplomatic corps of Georgia for their activities during the period full of the most difficult challenges and wishes all Georgian diplomats a successful new year in 2023.

For the President of Georgia, the embassy is the most important forum in relations with the diplomatic corps of Georgia. Despite this, the President did not participate in the opening event of the 2022 Ambassadors' Conference.

According to the Constitution of Georgia, the President of Georgia is the head of the state of

Georgia. The Constitution gives the highest status to the institution of the President in relation to all other state institutions.

Based on the above, gross violations of the generally recognized and established rules of state and diplomatic protocol are not allowed in the events of state institutions, especially at the main diplomatic conference organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. Such a violation, unfortunately, took place at the opening event of the ambassadors' conference and was expressed by the host of the event in not assigning the appropriate place for the President of Georgia during her participation in the conference.

The administration of the President of Georgia also considers it important to inform the public about the appointment of ambassadors by the President.

Six months after filing a lawsuit in the Constitutional Court regarding the constitutionality of the inaction of the President of Georgia regarding the appointment and dismissal of Georgian ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions, the presidential administration does not have any information regarding the said process.

The ambiguity created by the mentioned constitutional lawsuit in relation to the constitutional powers of the President requires its timely elimination, based on the state interests of



Georgia," the statement reads.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to President's Administration with a written statement, where they expressed concern that the "world-recognized rule" of the protocol layout was unacceptable to the President and hope that the technical circumstance will not be an obstacle for the President of Georgia to participate in high-level meetings with Georgian

diplomats in the future.

"4 central seats were designated for high-ranking guests at the event, at which time, the constitutional position of the president was taken into account and the president's seat was allocated to the central chair, to the left of the president was the seat of the Prime Minister of Georgia, and to the right of the speaker of the Parliament of Georgia.

The mentioned rule of proto-

col arrangement is recognized in the world and it is unfortunate that the arrangement given to the administration of the President was found to be unacceptable. We hope that the mentioned technical circumstance will not prove to be an obstacle for the President of Georgia to participate in high-level meetings with Georgian diplomats in the future," the statement published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs reads.

Irakli Gharibashvili delivers speech at 'Ambassadors' Conference 2022'



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili, delivered a speech at the "Ambassadors' Conference 2022" saying that the main event, and challenge of 2022 for the whole world was the war in Ukraine and according to him, Russia's unjustified military aggression turned the world agenda upside down.

"During the whole year, the main event, the main challenge and problem for the whole world was the war in Ukraine, Russia's unjustified military aggression, which actually turned the entire world order upside down. I would like to agree with Iliia Darchiashvili, our embassy and our ambassador to Ukraine did

not leave Kyiv until the last minute, while the embassies of other countries did. Our embassy fulfills its assigned duty until the last minute. I would like to thank our embassy and our ambassador to Ukraine, each employee.

Of course, today's events are a big challenge for all of us. It is our stated desire that this war ends as soon as possible, since this war poses a threat not only to Ukraine itself, but to the security architecture of the entire Europe, our region, and naturally, this war and its consequences will have an impact not only on our country, but on the whole world. It is necessary to end this conflict, this war in time, this is our desire.

I want to wish Ukrainian friends and Ukrainian people a fast end to this war. We reaffirm our support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and their

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7028; Euro - 2.8712; GBP - 3.2628; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.9030; Swiss Franc - 2.8988

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Irakli Gharibashvili delivers speech at ‘Ambassador’s Conference 2022’

sovereignty. I would like to note that we have done our best and are doing our best to help our Ukrainian friends and people,” Prime Minister said.

In his speech, Gharibashvili said that Georgia has supported Ukraine loudly on all platforms, has joined more than 400 resolutions and statements and expressed our support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in all formats.

The Prime Minister also touched on statements of the Ukraine officials, addressed to the Georgian government and said that they will refrain from making ‘unnecessary statements’ since Ukraine is at war, adding that protecting Georgia’s national interests remains a ‘main task’ and called on Ambassadors to work together

against disinformation and ‘orchestrated attacks’ on Georgia: “It was not pleasant for us to hear the statements that we hear from the representatives of the Ukrainian government. However, I would like to point out here that since the country and their government are at war, we do not want to make too many statements on this topic.

Our main task is to protect our national interests. Therefore, our main obligation is to protect the interests of our country. Naturally, the role of you, the ambassadors, in this great work is special, so that we can correctly convey our message to the capitals, correctly represent the interests of our country, and effectively deal with the

disinformation campaign that flows not only from our countries, but also from other countries. We understand very well that this is an orchestrated attack on the interests of our country. Therefore, this attack, this disinformation needs effective countermeasures,” stated the Prime Minister.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Russia does not rule out review of visa regime cancellation for Georgia



Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Mikhail Galuzin talked about the cancellation of the visa regime for Georgian citizens and said that “they do not rule out a positive decision” on this issue. Also, he said that “despite the absence of diplomatic relations, Russian-Georgian cooperation is developing.”

“In 2012, we unhesitatingly supported the course proposed by Tbilisi for the normalization of bilateral relations. And now, despite the difficult foreign situation and the absence of diplomatic relations, Russia-Georgia cooperation is developing. In the 11 months of this year, the trade turnover increased one and a half times compared to the same period in 2021 and reached 2.2 billion dollars. In parallel with trade, indicators are increasing in the direction of tourism and remittances.

As for diplomatic relations, I would like to recall that they were severed in 2008, at the initiative of Tbilisi, and [Tbilisi], unfortunately, continues to ignore the possibility of its restoration with its political demands,

which contradict the new reality in the region. Thus, the ball is still in the Georgian side.

As for the prospects of canceling the visa regime for Georgian citizens traveling to Russia, we do not rule out making a positive decision as soon as the necessary prerequisites are established,” said Galuzin.

PM Gharibashvili talks Georgia’s European Integration at ‘Ambassadors’ Conference’

The Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili said at the opening of the Ambassadors’ Conference that the government of Georgia “correctly and effectively” fulfilled the 12 recommendations determined by the European Commission to obtain the status of a candidate for EU membership.

“After the 12 priorities were defined, on the same day the ruling team, the ruling party, presented a very clear, clear road map to the public, including our partners. Mr. Speaker of the Parliament, the whole team was involved in this process, and we thoroughly, correctly, effectively fulfilled the said priorities, These recommendations. Working groups were created in the Parliament, unfortunately, I would like to note that the representatives of the opposition parties were not fully involved in this process, although in the end some of them participated.”

According to Irakli Gharibashvili, granting candi-



date status to Ukraine and Moldova in the summer of 2022 was a political decision:

“This year was marked by another very important positive event, which is the success of our country on the path of European integration. Our country adopted a European perspective. I agree, our expectation was that the country would receive the status of a candidate, unfortunately, we all understand very well that this political decision was not made I don’t want to say anything derogatory about our colleague states, but you know

very well that we are much, twice, three times ahead in terms of reforms, in terms of implementation in relation to Ukraine and Moldova, but it is clear, we understand very well that this was a political decision.

It was openly said that Ukraine was given the status of a candidate because it is at war, and Moldova was assessed as a state equal to the war. So we fully understand this motivation, but we only wish success to our friendly states, Moldova and Ukraine. We want peace and prosperity in these countries,” said Gharibashvili.

Kutaisi wins national best practice award for smart eco-city portfolio

The National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia (NALAG) announced the winners of its annual best local government and municipal practices competition.

The initiative was supported by the European Union, UNDP and Denmark, under their broader assistance for regional and local development in Georgia, including through the EU-funded programme Mayors for Economic Growth Facility (M4EG). Fourteen municipalities were awarded this year,



with Kutaisi winning the national award for the smart eco-city portfolio.

Earlier this year, Kutaisi was selected by the EU and UNDP for a two-year-long journey to explore a smart eco-city model and nature-based urban innovation and facilitate the transition towards green and sustainable life. This municipal transformation portfolio received •225,000 in funding from the EU under the M4EG Facility.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, December 27

Day ☀️ Clear High: 9°C

Night 🌙 Clear Low: 0°C

Wednesday, December 28

Day ☁️ Partly Cloudy High: 9°C

Night 🌧️ Mostly Cloudy Low: 3°C

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