

27 EU Member States Address Rati Bregadze with Official Démarche About Mikheil Saakashvili

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The European Union Ambassador to Georgia, H.E. Pawel Herczynski, together with the Ambassador of Sweden, H.E. Ulrik Tideström, handed over the official EU démarche to the Minister of Justice of Georgia, Rati Bregadze.

According to Herczynski, the démarche refers to the former president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili and all 27 member states of the European Union agreed to this démarche in Brussels.

"Together with the ambassador of Sweden, which represents the country holding the presidency of the European Union, we delivered an official démarche to the Minister of Justice. Démarche refers to the former president of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili. We are very concerned about the reports of his deteriorating health. What is very important is that all 27 member states of the European Union agree to this démarche," said the EU ambassador.

According to Herczynski, he had a very open and honest conversation with Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze. They introduced their position to Bregadze and the Minister provided the EU Ambassador with the information of what the Georgian government is doing to protect the rights of the imprisoned Saakashvili.

"We had a very open and honest conversation with the Minister of Justice. We presented the position of the European Union, which was agreed by 27 member states. The Minister of Justice provided us with information about what the Georgian government is doing to protect the rights of the former president, Mikheil Saakashvili, as an accused and a prisoner," Herczynski added.



UN in Georgia Calls on Authorities to Prevent Measures that Threaten Georgian Democracy

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The United Nations Organization in Georgia expressed deep concern regarding the draft law on "Transparency of Foreign Influence" in the issued statement. The UN wrote that the adoption of the said draft threatens the activities of

civil society and the media and their essential contribution to the construction of Georgia's democracy.

According to the UN, in Georgia, civil society organizations provide essential support to the most vulnerable and vulnerable groups of society and protect their rights.

"The stigmatization of civil society activities may leave vulnerable and vulnerable groups without proper assistance, including persons with disabilities, displaced persons, representatives of minorities, the elderly, women, youth, children, victims of domestic violence and other people who need effective support and assistance.

The bill threatens the respect and protection of such rights as freedom of association and expression, the right to participate in public activities, the right to privacy and personal data protection, and the prohibition of discrimination," United Nations said in a statement.

Considering Georgia's cur-

rent membership in the UN Human Rights Council, the UN calls on the Parliament of Georgia to seek legal opinions on the said draft law from competent regional and international bodies, to take into account the existing opinions on similar legislation and to conduct broad, inclusive and meaningful consultations with all interested parties that the adoption of this draft law may affect.

"The adoption of such a law may hinder the activities of the United Nations Organization within the framework of the Sustainable Development Cooperation Agreement, the country's strategy, which we have signed together with the Government of Georgia. For more than thirty years, the United Nations has been a reliable partner and ally of Georgia, supporting the development of Georgia in accordance with the country's national priorities and providing assistance to the Georgian people together with our local partners, including civil society and the media," read the statement.

The United Nations called on the Georgian authorities to take all necessary steps to prevent measures that would threaten Georgian democracy and hinder or slow down development support for Georgia.



UN Photo/John Isaac

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Second Version of 'Russian Law' Submitted for Consideration in Parliament of Georgia, Media Protests



At the meeting of the Bureau of the Parliament, the second version of the 'Agents of foreign

influence' law was registered and submitted to the leading committees for consideration.

The bill was initiated by the deputies who formally left the Georgian Dream and were supported by the ruling party.

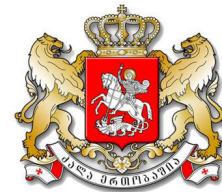
The media representatives protested the bill with banners with the inscription "No To Russian Law".

63 media organizations issued a joint statement, which reads that in the case of the adoption of the 'Russian law', they refuse to register as "agents of foreign influence".

According to the Media representatives, the adoption of this law damages the process of joining the European Union, which was clearly indicated by the High Representative of the European Union on February 24 - therefore, the submitted legislative amendment hinders the development of Georgia and closes the window of opportunity that has appeared today.

Ombudsman's Consilium Issues Another Report on Mikheil Saakashvili's Health Condition

The Public Defender issued a



საპარტყველომ სახალხო დამცველი PUBLIC DEFENDER (OMBUDSMAN) OF GEORGIA

report stating that on February 19, a group of specialists invited by the Public Defender of Georgia made another visit to the "Vivamed" clinic in order to assess Mikheil Saakashvili's health condition.

According to the Office of the Public Defender, taking into account their mandate, the purpose of the visits of the expert group, from the day of its creation, is to monitor the medical services provided to the patient. The group was/is not involved in the direct process of the patient's treatment.

"On February 19, the mem-

bers of the expert group were scheduled to examine the patient and review his medical documentation.

Mikheil Saakashvili's physical examination was completed, and unfortunately, the clinic could not provide medical materials on site due to non-working days. However, the Office of the Public Defender has requested complete medical materials from December 4, 2022 (the last visit of experts to Mikheil Saakashvili) until now, and the group of experts will additionally review the materials.

The Office of the Public Defender and the group of experts will continue intensive documentary monitoring of Mikheil Saakashvili's health management in the near future," the statement reads.

According to the assessment of the group of specialists invited by the ombudsman, the movement of the patient without supervision is dangerous, because the risk of falling, body damage/fractures is very high.

ZUGDIDI. 27 February 2023 - The women-led non-governmental organisation 'Hands for Peace' hosted a gala exhibition in Zugdidi to present the results of a 'Handicraft for Social Change' project, supported by the European Union (EU) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through the EU4Dialogue initiative.

The EU and UNDP support allowed 40 conflict-affected women to join a training programme in tailoring, embroidery, knitting and macramé to develop professional careers, earn a living, improve livelihoods and increase self-reliance. Six training participants already found jobs in different local enterprises and one of the beneficiaries was successful in applying for a grant programme.

"In partnership with the European Union and civil society organizations, we help conflict-affected women to become successful in business and professional careers. Better access to educational and economic opportunities empowers women and benefits the entire community," said Mariam Begiashvili, EU4Dialogue Project Officer.

Creating career opportunities for women affected by conflict

Gala event in Zugdidi showcases handicrafts made by 40 women supported by the EU and UNDP

The gala event opened with a runway show with the project beneficiaries and their children presenting clothes and accessories created during the training. Guests also visited a craft fair where project participants displayed their needlework, including various garments and knitted toys.

In addition to handicraft training, 'Hands for Peace' helped women to master marketing, sales and social media, as well as learn how to write business proposals and apply for grants.

Aiming to build social cohesion in a conflict-affected society, the project brought together internally displaced people and their host communities. Out of 40 training participants, 15 were displaced from the Abkhazia region, and 25 were the residents of the Khobi, Tsalenjikha and Zugdidi municipalities.

under the broader EU4Dialogue program. The project partners with local civil society organizations and grassroots groups to

improve socio-economic conditions for people, build livelihoods, drive progress toward gender equality, promote youth engage-

ment and support the peaceful transformation of conflict. More information on the website: https://bit.ly/3BlreEv

Weather

Tuesday, February 28

Day Partly Cloudy High: 19°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 6°C

Wednesday, March 1

Day Partly Cloudy High: 17°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 7°C

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