

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan Says Georgia's EU Path Depends on Georgian People

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

US Ambassador to Georgia Kelly Degan was asked by the reporters about the informal governance of the country by Bidzina Ivanishvili.

In response, Kelly Degan stated that the decision-making regarding the future of the country is solely based on the will of the Georgian people:

"What I have seen in this country is that decision-making depends on the people of Georgia. I think we saw this about a week ago, when about 100,000 citizens of Georgia took to the streets to peacefully express their decision and their choice regarding the European future."

As Degan noted, the decision-makers are those citizens who came out all over Georgia to protect the European perspective.

When asked whether Georgia has a chance of getting candidate status under the conditions of informal governance, Kelly Degan said that the status depends on the reforms defined by the European Union.

"Georgia's acceptance of the candidate status depends on whether Georgia fulfills the reforms that the European Union has set as a guide on Georgia's path to Europe. It depends on everyone, it depends on the parliament, other stakeholders, civil society, which can contribute to the implementation of the necessary reforms.



These are not new reforms, they are what Georgia has been working on step by step and in some cases it has made really good progress. But of course, there is more to do. Don't imagine that this is just a one-man

project, it's for the entire population of Georgia, for all elected leaders to come together and work inclusively and stop spending so much time fighting each other and spend more time implementing the 12 recommen-

dations to truly improve democracy in Georgia.

This is what the member states of the European Union are waiting for, to see if Georgia is committed to democracy, if Georgia is strong for the building of

democracy, and that the population of Georgia is also committed to it. This is what they want to see. And I hope that the government will listen to them, listen to its own people and take the necessary steps," said Degan.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock meets with Salome Zourabichvili and Ilia Darchiashvili

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE



The President of Georgia, Salome Zourabichvili, met with the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Annalena Baerbock within the framework of Baerbock's official visit to Georgia and discussed the issues related to the European integration process of Georgia.

As the President of Georgia stated at the meeting held in the Orbeliani palace, the population of Georgia will not accept a second refusal regarding the status of a candidate for the European Union and will consider itself abandoned by Europe in such a difficult situation.

The President emphasized the importance of Foreign Affairs Minister's visit as, according to her, it is an expression of Germany's continued support

for Georgia's independence and European integration.

"During my last visit to the USA, I had a telephone conversation with the President of Germany, who confirmed to me the unwavering support of Georgia, and your presence here is a clear confirmation of this," the President of Georgia addressed to the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany.

On the other hand, Annalena Baerbock said that she is in Georgia because she wants to see Georgia and its population in the European Union:

"That is why I am here and this is what my government supports. Georgia needs to continue the reforms in order to get the status of a candidate," said Baerbock.

Within the framework of her official visit to Georgia, Annalena Baerbock also held a joint press conference with Georgia's Foreign Minister, Ilia Darchiashvili.

Baerbock focused on completing all 12 recommendations and

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5764; Euro - 2.7665; GBP - 3.1453; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.3585; Swiss Franc - 2.8017

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noted that the Georgian government cannot become a member of the European Union, without the civil society and on the contrary, civil society cannot become a member of the European Union without the Georgian government.

“We are very happy that we have made significant progress, especially in terms of the implementation of the 12 priorities and also in terms of the follow-up process. There are 12 priorities to gain candidate status. This is the most important task for all of us. We talked about it in detail and

naturally, joint work is necessary. In the process of joining, it is necessary to uphold the rule of law and implement democratic standards. Listening is also an integral part of democracy. Even when opinions are radically different from each other, including in society. Therefore, after the withdrawal of the ‘Foreign

Agents’ bill, the task of politics is now to overcome polarization, restore trust and implement reforms with full conviction. It is necessary to carry out reforms in this country so that Georgia can enter the European Union,” said Baerbock.

According to her, Georgia’s accession to the European Union

is only possible jointly, because this is the driving force of the European Union, as in Baerbock words, the European Union is characterized by very different members. According to her it’s not a weakness but a strength.

“That is why the unofficial motto of the European Union is ‘Unity in Plurality’. We want to

implement this together with Georgia in the future. Therefore, it is necessary not to waste any more time. This is a moment in history from which we must not back down. It is important to continue this process on the basis of our close relations and cooperate more closely,” said Baerbock.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock meets with Salome Zourabichvili and Ilia Darchiashvili

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Zurab Azarashvili Meets with Joachim Stamp



Minister of IDPs from Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Protection of Georgia Zurab Azarashvili met with Joachim Stamp, Special Commissioner of the German Federal Government on Migration Issues.

According to the Ministry of Health, the parties discussed issues of labor migration, mi-

grants’ rights and circular labor migration.

“At the meeting, the importance of labor migration regulation in Georgia and the implementation of planned changes in

the law in this direction were emphasized.

According to Azarashvili, the implementation of the planned changes will help legal labor migration, reduce cases of illegal labor migration, establish an effective system of state monitoring of the activities of individuals and legal entities related to labor arrangements outside

Georgia and encourage their legal activities.

On his part, Stamp informed Azarashvili about the goals and future plans of the German side in the direction of migration policy.

The special commissioner for migration issues of the German federal government expressed his support for the ongoing reforms in Georgia and his readiness to further deepen the cooperation,” the ministry’s statement reads.

Kelly Degnan Comments on Salome Zourabichvili’s Recent Statement on Nika Gvaramia’s Pardoning

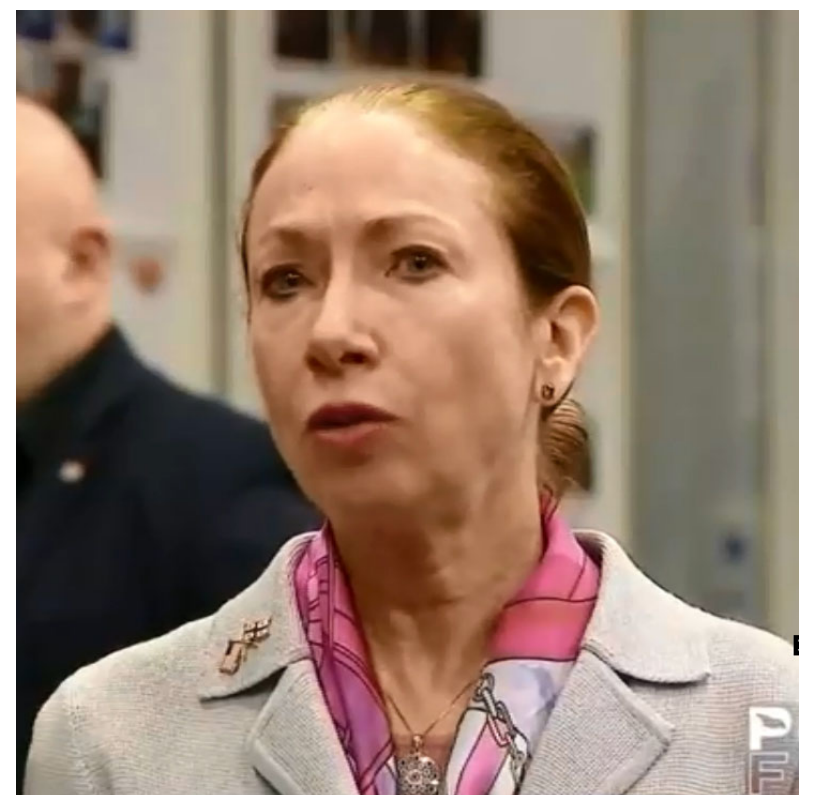
US Ambassador to Georgia, Kelly Degnan, told reporters that the freedom of the media is important for the development of democracy. According to her, it is of more importance especially recently, when the media space is ‘narrowing’.

Degnan was asked a question about the statement made by President Zourabichvili, regarding Nika Gvaramia’s pardon, where Zourabichvili noted that she would say “whatever will be and how it will be”.

As Kelly Degnan said, this decision is for the president to make completely.

“Media freedom is important for the development of democracy, especially in the recent

independent, free media is very important so that the population has access to accurate information that is not presented in only one direction. We will always focus on viable, strong media

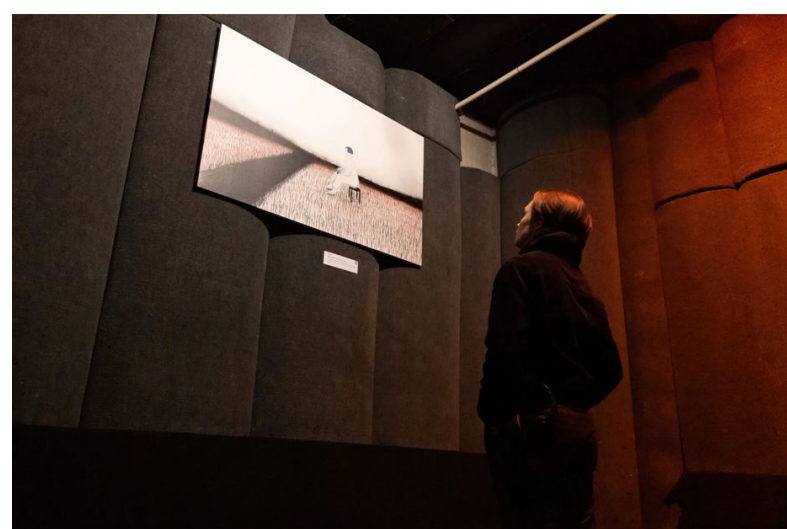


period, when we see that the media space is narrowing. Therefore, the existence of an

because this is especially important in the process of building democracy,” said Degnan.

EU4Climate: Exhibition in Tbilisi highlights impact of climate change on the most vulnerable

On March 18-19, the ‘Climate Basics’ non-governmental organisation and the ‘Collective Failure’ group of artists



organised a group exhibition supported by the European Union and UNDP as part of the EU4Climate programme.

Through various mediums such as installations, paintings, textile art, video art and performance art, the ‘Landscapes of the Invisible’ exhibition demonstrated how climate change deepens existing inequalities and increases the vulnerability of socially marginalised groups.

“The art exhibition showcases how our world gets destroyed by climate-induced disasters, pollution and unsustainable management of natural resources, and

how the hidden, but acute impacts of climate change affect the most vulnerable – women, children, and socially or economically disadvantaged communities,” the EU Delegation to Georgia said in a Facebook post.

The exhibition featured works by artists and activists, including Davit Kukhalashvili, Natia Sapanadze, Philip Grechulevich, Salomeya Bauer, Wer Michelle, Tutasay, Nina’s Art, Nika Museridze, and Zoya Baboo. Most of the artworks have been specifically created for this project.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Monday, March 27

Day Light Rain
High: 14°C

Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 6°C

Tuesday, March 28

Day Clear
High: 20°C

Night Clear
Low: 8°C

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