

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

EU Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi Says Pace of Progress on EU Path Depends on Implementation of Key Reforms

On March 23, representatives of non-governmental organizations addressed a letter to Olivér Várhelyi asking to make the interim evaluation related to the implementation of the 12 recommendations public.

European Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Olivér Várhelyi responded to the Civil Society Organizations that addressed him about the European Union giving Georgia a European perspective.

In his response, the European Commissioner stated that the European Union is grateful for the involvement of Georgian civil society in the process of monitoring the implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement.

"Dear representatives of Civil Public Organizations of Georgia, I thank you for your letter of March 24, 2023 regarding Georgia's implementation of the 12 priorities defined in the opinion of the European Commission of June 17, 2023.

Let me, first of all, emphasize our commitment to support Georgia on its European path. Civil society plays an important role in this effort and also has an essential role to play in protecting the democratic state.

We are grateful to the civil society of Georgia for its involvement in the process of monitor-

ing the implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, as well as for its contribution to policy formation.

As mentioned in your letter, on June 23-24, 2022, the European Council granted Georgia a European perspective.

After this decision, the commission closely monitors the steps taken by Georgia in the direction of implementation of the 12 priorities and contributes to solving the main issues of Georgia as quickly and efficiently as possible.

At the same time, as with all enlargement countries, the pace of progress on the EU path depends on the implementation of key reforms.

In the spring of 2023, the Commission will orally present to the Council updated information on Georgia's fulfillment of 12 priorities.

The timing and modalities of this update are still under discussion. A formal report on the implementation of the priorities will be part of the Commission's annual expansion package in the fall," Várhelyi's letter reads.



PM Irakli Gharibashvili Chairs Commission Session for Integration of Georgia's EU Integration

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The 66th session of the European Union Integration Commission of Georgia was held under the leadership of the Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili.

The participants of the session discussed the report intended for the European Commission by Georgia, which was prepared for the first time in accordance with the Copenhagen criteria within the framework of the EU enlargement package, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs coordinated this process.

Based on the mentioned report, the European Commission will evaluate Georgia according to the so-called Copenhagen Criteria which includes both political and economic and sectoral parts.

It was noted at the meeting that by the decision of the European Council in June 2022, based on the European perspective given to Georgia, Georgia moved from the status of an associated country to the ranks of enlargement countries.

CONTINUED ON Page 2



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.5197; Euro - 2.7651; GBP - 3.1340; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.0861; Swiss Franc - 2.8106

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CONTINUED FROM Page 1

Accordingly, the European Commission will annually prepare an evaluation report on Georgia, along with other countries in the process of accession.

The report, prepared based on the structure corresponding to the

Copenhagen criteria, consists of 35 chapters and includes the activities carried out within the framework of integration with the European Union during the last year.

The development of the report began at the end of February in accordance with the request of the European Commission,

and all state agencies, legislative bodies and judicial authorities were involved in the process.

The evaluation report of the European Commission will be published in the fall of 2023, based on which, at the end of 2023, the European Council will discuss the issue of granting Georgia the status

of a candidate country.

The 2023 action plan for Georgia's integration into the European Union was also approved at the commission's meeting, which includes important events planned for the year in terms of integration into the European Union.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgian Dream Refuses to Register to Vote Regarding Creation of Investigative Commission on US Sanctioned Judges 'In Solidarity'



Due to the lack of a quorum, the plenary session in the Parliament of Georgia, where the issue of creating an investigative commission to study corruption and other types of violations in the judicial system was planned

to be discussed, ended without voting as Georgian Dream refused to register.

According to Irakli Kobakhidze, the leader of the majority, refusal to register was an "act of solidarity" towards Georgian judges who were sanctioned for alleged corruption by the United States.

More than half of the deputies

tered at the session which was not enough to start voting.

"We have made a decision not to go through registration before voting. This is an act of solidarity towards Georgian judges," Kobakhidze said.

Irakli Gharibashvili Calls Davit Kezerashvili's Alleged Involvement in international Fraud Scheme 'Catastrophic'

Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili talked about the so-called case of 'call centers' at the government session - the international fraud scheme in which BBC alleged Davit Kezerashvili's involvement.

Irakli Gharibashvili called it 'catastrophic' that former Defense Minister of Georgia Kezerashvili is now, according to him, is referred to as a 'fraudster of international level'

According to Gharibashvili, investigative services of Georgia made a significant contribution to the investigation of the international fraud scheme.

"The truth is certain, it has

been revealed that, unfortunately, our citizen, the former Minister of Defense, Mr. Kezerashvili is already referred to as a fraudster of international level, which, of course, is catastrophic, and the fact that, as you know, he robbed the army before, is even more disturbing. His company worked in an unprecedented fraudulent scheme



throughout Europe and robbed pensioners. A billion dollars worth of damage was done.

So, when our representatives of the so-called radical, extremist opposition meet with our European friends and partners, I want to tell our European friends that they are meeting

with representatives of a party funded by the robber of their citizens.

So instead of our opposition being involved in destructive activities on a daily basis, they must now apologize to our public and the European public every day. They should give explanations why the entire opposition spectrum, almost all oppo-

sition parties, and their TV stations are financed with stolen money from European pensioners." Irakli Gharibashvili said.

The Prime Minister thanked the investigative services, which, according to him, were involved in the investigation of a very complex scheme.

Georgia: EU and IOM deliver vehicles and modern equipment to border guards in Vakhtangisi

Weather

Wednesday, April 19

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 21°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 12°C

Thursday, April 20

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 21°C

Night Showers

Low: 11°C



The European Union, together with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), has delivered vehicles and modern equipment to the border guards in Vakhtangisi, a Georgian village located near the border with Azerbaijan.

"The new equipment, financed by the European Union, will strengthen the Border Police in protecting Georgia's external border and help them better respond to illegal activities, including trafficking," said Pawel Herchzynski, the Head of European Union Delegation to Georgia.

The vehicles and equipment were provided as part of the IOM's flagship long term project 'Support to Integrated Border Management of Georgia'.

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