

## Georgia Should be Granted Candidate Status for EU Membership, Says Ambassador Pawel Herczynski

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Ambassador of the European Union to Georgia, Pawel Herczynski, has expressed his personal opinion that Georgia should be granted the status of a candidate for European Union membership by the end of the year.

According to Herczynski, Georgia is currently at a crucial moment in its path towards European integration. He emphasized the significance of fostering intensive dialogue between Georgia and the 27 member states of the European Union to ensure a favorable decision regarding Georgia's application for EU membership. The EU Ambassador said that he welcomes and supports the relations between Georgian political leaders and their counterparts from EU member states, as well as the visits of high-level EU politicians to Georgia.

Herczynski stated that the European Commission is in the process of preparing the first enlargement report for Georgia, which is scheduled for publication in October. This report will provide recommendations for Georgia's progress towards EU

membership. At the end of the year, the leaders of the 27 EU member states, including presidents and prime ministers, will convene to determine the next steps in relation to Georgia's application.

Despite Ambassador Herczynski expressing his belief that Georgia should receive candidate status, he highlighted the importance of making significant progress on the 12 priorities outlined by the EU during the remaining time until the end of the year.

"We all know that this is a key moment for Georgia. Georgia is at the crossroads of European integration. That is why it is extremely important that the dialogue between Georgia and the 27 member states of the European Union is as intensive as possible. That is why we clearly welcome and support the relations of political leaders of Georgia with 27 member states and the visits of high-level politicians of EU member states to Georgia.

This is very important, the dialogue is as intensive as possible to ensure that the 27 member states make the right decision at the end of the year, when Georgia has to take a step for-



ward to join the European Union. As far as you know, the European Commission is preparing a report, the first enlargement report for Georgia. This report will be published in October, which will include recommendations.

Then the leaders of the 27 member states of the European

Union, at the highest level, the presidents and prime ministers of the 27 countries, will meet at the end of the year and decide what further steps should be taken in relation to Georgia's application for joining the European Union.

In my personal position, Geor-

gia should get the candidate status, but it is extremely important to use the remaining time until the end of the year to achieve maximum progress in relation to the 12 priorities, and it is also very important that good news comes from Georgia," stated Herczynski.

## Shalva Papuashvili Highlights France's Support and Georgia's Responsibilities in the European Integration Process

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, revealed that the primary focus of all meetings during their visit to France revolved around Georgia's European integration process, considering the prevailing security challenges in the region. Papuashvili further expressed that France provided unequivocal support for Georgia's journey towards European integration.

Papuashvili stated that in the ongoing process, Georgia bears its share of responsibility and must take necessary steps. According to him, after signing the association agreement, Georgia acts with a strong awareness of its responsibilities. Papuashvili highlighted that Georgia holds a leadership position not only among the associated trio but also surpasses other candidates in several aspects.

"For the last 30 years, France has been involved in strengthening Georgia's positions while representing our country's national interests. For example, France's supportive position on non-recognition policies has played a decisive role in working with different countries. In this regard, we have once again received confirmation that

this support will continue. Additionally, we had a two-hour meeting in the Foreign Relations Committee with the participation of all factions of the French National Assembly. I am confident that when the time comes to make a political decision regarding candidate status, we will have solid support.

In this process, Georgia has its share of responsibility and steps to take. We act with a strong awareness of this responsibility after signing the association agreement. Georgia not only leads among the associated trio but also surpasses other candidates in many aspects. We acknowledge and share our responsibility. This process works as a two-way street. Georgia is not merely complaining to the European Union, nor is it an extra burden for them.

Just as Georgia needs to be a part of the European family, the European Union also needs Georgia to be a part of this family because Europe and the European Union are projects of peace and economic prosperity. Georgia can contribute to the European Union both in terms of ensuring peace and security and ensuring prosperity, considering its importance as one of the crucial parts of the middle corridor that swiftly connects Europe and Asia," said Papuashvili.





The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

UNM's Tina Bokuchava Emphasizes the Importance of Opposition Consolidation

have a European future or become a Russian periphery. Therefore, it is crucial for the entire opposition to consider this and take steps towards consolidation. We are fully prepared for this! We have been



Tina Bokuchava, the chairman of the United National Movement party, emphasized the significance of strong opposition unity during the pre-election period, whether it be the upcoming early elections or the parliamentary elections in 2024.

Bokuchava highlights that opposition consolidation can take various forms and should not be limited to pre-election coalition unity, particularly when the formation of electoral blocs may not be feasible.

"It will be a historic election that will determine the fate of our country, not just who will hold ministerial positions. This election is about whether our country will

major players in previous elections, and today we are the leading pro-Western opposition political team in the political landscape. It is our duty to approach the upcoming elections in collaboration and unity with other opposition parties, with the aim of forming a coalition government. This is the winning formula for success and the salvation of our country," said Tina Bokuchava.

Pawel Herczynski Affirms Freedom of Assembly and Speech as Key Pillars of Democracy

Pawel Herczynski, the EU Ambassador



to Georgia, expressed his hope for the enforcement of freedom of assembly and speech in Georgia, emphasizing that these are fundamental pillars for any democratic nation.

"Freedom of assembly and freedom of speech are among the main pillars of any democratic country. We sincerely hope that these rights will be enforced in Georgia as well. As the EU ambassador, we closely observe the situation and emphasize the importance of protecting these fundamental rights," said the EU Ambassador.

He also addressed the case of Nika Gvaramia, the founder of Mtavari Channel, and highlighted the significance of media freedom, which is one of the 12 priorities.

"And we sincerely hope that everything will be done to ensure the maximum freedom of Georgian society and Georgian media. As for the question of what the President of Georgia should do or what she should not do, it is up to the President of Georgia to decide," the Ambassador stated.

Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict: EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus visits Yerevan

EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia Toivo Klaar visited Armenia on 6 June.

In Yerevan, he met Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, Deputy Prime Minister Mher Grigoryan, and Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan.



His meetings follow recent high-level EU meetings with the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, notably in Brussels on 14 May, and in Chisinau on 1 June, on the margins of the European Political Community summit.

The next trilateral meeting between the two countries and the EU is planned for 21 July.

After his visit to Yerevan, Toivo Klaar will travel to Baku for similar consultations with the Azerbaijani leadership.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Thursday, June 8

Day Light Rain  
High: 24°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 17°C

Friday, June 9

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 17°C

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