

By LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Irakli Gharibashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia met with the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, in Brussels. The focus of the discussion, as stated by the Georgian government administration's press service, was Georgia's journey towards joining the European Union. They further mentioned that the participants deliberated on Georgia's advancements in fulfilling the European Commission's 12 priorities.

“The leaders acknowledged that the recognition of the country's European perspective is a historic decision and emphasized the critical importance of granting candidate status to Georgia by the end of the year, which would contribute to ending polarization within the country. During the conversation, special attention was given to the security environment in the region and the challenging security and humanitarian situation in the occupied territories of Georgia. The significant role of Georgia in ensuring peace and stability in the region was emphasized.”

In the current situation, the Prime Minister emphasized the EU's involvement in the region, focusing on promoting peace, security, and deepening transport, energy, and infrastructural connections between Georgia and the EU within the Black Sea region. The information further stated that Irakli Gharibashvili expressed gratitude to Charles Michel for his personal efforts in supporting Georgia's EU accession process and endorsing Georgia's European perspective.” the statement reads.

According to Gharibashvili's statement during his meeting with President Charles Michel of the European Council, they discussed Georgia's desire to join Europe. Gharibashvili expressed his gratitude on his Twitter page, thanking Michel for his personal support towards Georgia's European aspirations.

“I am delighted to meet with the President of the European Council. Outlined

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Meets Charles Michel in Brussels



that Georgia's European quest is firm as ever & we hope that the European Council will make another historic decision this year granting EU candidate status to Georgia. Want to thank President Michel for his personal support to Georgia's European future,” wrote Gharibashvili.

After the meeting with Prime Minis-

ter Gharibashvili, Charles Michel also took to Twitter to express his thoughts on Georgia's future. He emphasized the chance for Georgia to shape a new trajectory for generations based on its historical European perspective.

“Welcome back to Brussels, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili. With the

historic European perspective, you have the opportunity to chart a new trajectory for Georgia for generations.

Systemic reforms, inclusiveness and transparency are now needed more than ever. For the people of Georgia,” Michel wrote.

Georgian Prime Minister Meets With European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi



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During his official visit to Brussels, Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, held a meeting with Olivér Várhelyi, the European Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement.

According to the Georgian government's press office, during the meeting, Prime Minister Gharibashvili presented Olivér Várhelyi with comprehensive information regarding the favorable progress made by Georgia in fulfilling the 12 priorities outlined by the European Commission. Additionally, the Prime Minister highlighted the state's dedicated efforts in fully implementing the recommendations put forth by the European Union.

“Irakli Gharibashvili drew attention to the historic decision of recognizing the country's European perspective and emphasized the strategic importance of

granting Georgia the status of a candidate country by the end of the year.

During the meeting, there was a particular emphasis placed on connectivity initiatives within the Black Sea region and the opportunities for deepening transport, energy, and infrastructural connections between Georgia and the European Union in this regard.

The parties also discussed the security situation in the region. As the Prime Minister noted, Georgia is committed to ensuring peace and stability in the region,” states the official information.

After the meeting with European Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili took to Twitter to express his hopes for Georgia's future.

Irakli Gharibashvili thanked Olivér Várhelyi for his position supporting Georgia's European aspirations.

“Had a productive discussion with Oliver Varhelyi in Brussels. Discussed progress Georgia has made in addressing 12 priorities. We appreciate the Commissioner's stance in support of Georgia's European aspirations. We hope EU candidate status will be granted to Georgia this year,” Gharibashvili wrote.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Irakli Gharibashvili Delivers a Speech at Europalia Festival



During his speech at the international festival Europalia in Brussels and at the solemn event celebrating Georgia's Independence Day, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili expressed that all efforts are dedicated to Georgia's goal of joining the European Union. He emphasized that regaining Georgia's position among European nations has been a dream cherished by generations of Georgians, and the country is prepared to undertake all necessary measures to turn this dream into reality.

According to Gharibashvili, Georgia has emerged as one of the leaders among the countries aspiring to become mem-

bers of the European Union.

"Indeed, over the past decade, we have accomplished historically significant tasks, including signing the association agreement, obtaining a visa-free regime with the European Union, establishing a free trade agreement, and emerging as one of the leading countries aspiring to join the European Union. The European Union's granting of the prospect of EU membership to Georgia stands as the greatest foreign policy achievement in our nation's modern history. Following this decision, we will spare no effort to attain EU candidate status by the end of the year, marking the beginning of a new phase of Georgia's Western integration.

With utmost responsibility, I reiterate our commitment to implementing all priority recommendations of the European Commission and securing candidate status. We have never wavered from our chosen path, and we will ensure that nothing obstructs Georgia's democratic, European, and prosperous future. Our history, culture, values, and recent accomplishments have equipped us to face the challenges on our journey toward the EU.

The geographical position of Georgia has contributed to the rich history of our people, being at the crossroads of great

empires and the boundary between Europe and Asia, Eastern and Western civilizations. Although we have often found ourselves as targets in these conflicts, throughout the centuries, they have only strengthened our nation, shaping our identity and values. It is from this unique historical experience that our desire to join the European Union stems. This confidence propels us forward on this path, even when few believed in our ability to achieve it," stated Gharibashvili.



Shalva Papuashvili Disappointed by MEPs' Failure to Apologize after Strasbourg's Decision on Saakashvili

Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia stated that the opposition seeks to hinder Georgia from achieving its desired status by hoping for a deterioration in the country's situation. According to him, their ultimate goal is to generate unrest and seize power.

Papuashvili stated that notable progress in the implementation of the 12 recommendations has been observed globally, and there is widespread recognition that the denial of the status to one of the top three countries constituted a sig-

nificant injustice.

"Now the question is whether the European Union will be able to correct this injustice. After the decision made in Strasbourg regarding Mikheil Saakashvili, I had expected that some European parliamentarians would apologize to the Georgian people for those resolutions where they directly blamed Georgia, as if torture were taking place in this country and its rights were being violated. Unfortunately, I was disappointed. Instead of apologizing for the misinformation, we heard the same misinformation being repeated. It is disheartening that some MEPs remain stubborn in their own mistakes, while others persist in their actions," Papuashvili said.

Consultation meeting held in Tbilisi between AFD and the Government of Georgia- Priority set on Agricultural and Environmental protection in 2023

Third annual consultation meeting between the Government of Georgia and the French Development Agency (AFD) took place in Tbilisi on June 14 to discuss the implementation of ongoing development projects.

Eka Guntsadze, Deputy Minister of Finance, and Cécile Couprie, AFD Regional Director for Eurasia attended the meeting together with HE. Sheraz Gasri, Ambassador of France to Georgia.

Main Achievement of cooperation between Georgia and AFD is the increasing support to Agricultural development and Environmental protection.

The French-Georgian Agricultural cooperation is built on the innovative development approaches of the AFD/EU FinExCoop Georgia project and of the French Treasury/MEPA (Ministry of Environmental protection and Agriculture) FASEP Development of small ruminants in Georgia. Both projects have combined strategic policy advice with practical work for the improvement of technical capacities of Georgians in key value-chains, with large interactions with the French-Geor-



gian University.

In June 2022 the European Union perspective was granted to Georgia alongside with the twelve recommendations to address the key reform areas in this process. The socially inclusive, and climate friendly modernization of the Georgian agrarian sector is expected to become the backbone of the French-Georgian cooperation. The scope of this cooperation is broad: it involves central governments, regional authorities through the PADAIG program approved by AFD Board in March 2023, the academic sector, private companies including cooperative enterprises, farmers organizations, and individual farmers.

On June 13, the French Delegation composed of AFD, Embassy of France, and the institutions: LACTALIS, Carrefour, UFG (Université Franco Géorgienne), and FinExCoop project together with the Georgian partners con-

ducted site visits. This field trip celebrates two symbols of French and Georgian cooperation in the field: Santé Lactalis Factory, and a highly innovative vineyard and feedlot farm in Sartichala, co-owned by Georgian and French investors. The visits reflected the strategic importance of the agriculture in the French-Georgian partnership.

In honor of this agricultural cooperation of the two countries, Georgia will be the guest country of the Livestock Summit in Clermont-Ferrand, France in October 2023. It will be the occasion to better map up the future actions to be developed between the two countries.

Ambassador of France to Georgia HE. Sheraz Gasri: "I am delighted to participate to the Third Annual Consultations between AFD and the Georgian Government. France is a strong supporter of Georgia's successful development and European aspirations.

Fighting social inequalities through adequate social and health coverage, protecting environment, promoting energy and food security and sovereignty are our shared priorities. We have achieved progress and we will continue to work with all relevant stakeholders in Georgia, institutions as well as civil society organizations, within Team Europe to meet Georgia's ambitions for the well-being of its people".

Eka Guntsadze, Deputy Minister of Finance of Georgia: "France has established itself as Georgia's leading partner during our cooperation by providing timely and effective assistance through AFD in line with the country's development priorities. I want to emphasize how much we appreciate your support and count on it continuing.

In addition, I would like to express our gratitude for the support AFD has provided for Georgia's economic development in key areas like energy independence and efficiency, irrigation, human capital, regional development, reform of state-owned enterprises (SOE), reform of the railway transportation, water supply, social security, healthcare, and the fight against climate change.

We declare our willingness to work with France to further advance our partnership in support of Georgia's ongoing economic and structural reforms."

Tengiz Nasaridze, Deputy Minister Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture of Georgia: "All the activities, programs

and events that we plan and implement together with our partners, on the one hand, are aimed at maximum and effective utilization of the potential in the agricultural sector, promoting the production and sale of competitive Georgian products that are in demand on international markets, and on the other hand, our goal is to develop production and growth in parallel of protecting our environment, water, land and forest resources from pressure and damage. Accordingly, we are actively working on issues of implementation of international standards and European management systems. The support of our international partners and the sharing of best practices is the most important factor in achieving the set goals. I thank all international and donor organizations, including the French Development Agency, for many years of successful and planned future cooperation."

Cécile Couprie, AFD Regional Director for Eurasia: "Our partnership with Georgia was celebrated during the Annual Consultations Meetings, and is renewed for the next 2024-2027 period. It encloses financing on projects in the energy, water, human development and agriculture sectors, and entails Georgia's strategic priorities. The annual consultations are a key moment to see the impacts of our projects together and how they contribute to the fight against climate change. AFD is honored to support Georgia in its European perspective and on the upcoming opportunities and challenges."

Weather

Thursday, June 15

Day Partly Cloudy High: 28°C

Night T-storm Low: 18°C

Friday, June 16

Day Partly Cloudy High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy Low: 17°C

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