

## Pawel Herczynski Affirms European Commission's Agreement with Venice Commission's Proposal of Systematic Approach

By Liza Mchedlidze

Pawel Herczynski, the EU ambassador to Georgia, expressed his hopes that the political elite in Georgia would adopt the systematic approach proposed by the Venice Commission, which has gained the agreement of the European Commission. This approach aims to establish the highest international standards, particularly in relation to the de-oligarchization law. Ambassador Herczynski emphasized that among the 12 priorities, the 5th priority specifically focuses on addressing the issue of excessive influence exerted by wealthy individuals in Georgia's public and political spheres.

"It has always been up to the Georgians to decide how they want to address this issue. In its last recommendation, the Venice Commission was very clear that the notion of a law on de-oligarchization is incorrect as it carries significant risks. Instead, the Venice Commission proposed an alternative systematic approach—an approach that is transparent and responsible, taking into account the existing environment. We, the European Commission, agree with the Venice Commission's proposal, as it upholds the highest international standards. I sincerely hope that the political elite in Georgia chooses this approach to



effectively address the 5th priority, which pertains to de-oligarchization," stated Herczynski.

Furthermore, the determination of the candidate's status must be made by the 27 member states of the European Union at the highest political level. According to him, this decision will be contingent upon unani-

mous agreement among the member states.

"It is extremely challenging for me to provide any definitive statements. I have already expressed my personal opinion in a clear and emphatic manner. However, regrettably, the decision is not within my control, nor is it in the hands of my superiors or the EU institutions. The

determination of the subsequent course of action regarding EU-Georgia relations rests with the 27 member states at the highest political level. In December, the presidents and prime ministers of these 27 countries will convene to discuss and make a decision. The crucial aspect to understand, as I have reiterated multiple times, is that this deci-

sion will require unanimous agreement. Each member state must be in agreement regarding the next steps in EU-Georgia relations. We still have six months until December, and we anticipate making considerable progress on the 12 priorities. We earnestly desire positive news from Georgia to foster a favorable atmosphere for future EU-Georgia relations," stated the EU Ambassador.

According to Pawel Herczynski, Georgia has achieved notable progress in certain priorities and the EU is awaiting outcomes on others. The Venice Commission explicitly expressed the need for a different approach, one that diverges from the choice made by the ruling party.

In October, the European Commission will evaluate the progress made, which will be reflected in the first report on enlargement pertaining to Georgia. This report will be comprehensive, based on merit, and will encompass 35 chapters covering the 12 priorities. It will be presented in detailed and technical terms. Nevertheless, the final decision regarding EU-Georgia relations lies with the 27 member states and will be determined at the highest political level during the European Council meeting in December.

## Mikheil Saakashvili Responds to Zourabichvili's Statements Regarding His Pardoning

By Liza Mchedlidze



In a letter addressed to the Ukrainian publication 'Ukrainskaya Pravda', Mikheil Saakashvili, the former president of Georgia, expressed his perspective on Salome Zourabichvili's comments during an interview with the same publication. Saakashvili, who considers himself a personal prisoner of Putin, contends that Zourabichvili's remarks do not deviate from the Russian party line, despite her "making a toast" about the occupation and Europe.

Zourabichvili, in her interview, stated that many individuals sought pardons, but she clarified that pardons are not a solution, particularly considering the Georgian people's experiences during Saakashvili's nine-year regime.

CONTINUED ON Page 2

**Mikheil Saakashvili** ✓

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# Mikheil Saakashvili Responds to Zourabichvili's Statements Regarding His Pardoning

CONTINUED FROM Page 1

In his letter, Saakashvili criticized Zourabichvili, highlighting her hypocrisy and tendency to align with Bidzina Ivanishvili's preferences. He pointed out that Georgia faced blame for the 2008 war, but acknowledged that she occasionally makes favorable statements. Saakashvili also accused her of seeking an invitation from Zelensky and described Zourabichvili as Ivanishvili's tool to confuse Western countries and Ukraine. He recalled that Ivanishvili had sought his conviction for the 'attack on Tskhinvali (i.e., Russia)' in 2008 and accused Zourabichvili of welcoming Russian provocations. According to Saakashvili,

she currently has a role similar to that of Hungary's president.

Saakashvili expressed his appreciation to President Zelensky and his team for their continuous and public support in defending his rights. He acknowledged that Ukraine, recognizing his Ukrainian citizenship, has officially sought his extradition. Furthermore, he highlighted that the European Parliament unanimously passed a resolution demanding his release, referring to his arrest as a personal vendetta of an oligarch.

"I am currently in a Georgian prison because, in 2014, when I arrived in Ukraine and assisted the new government after the Euromaidan, Putin personally instructed the oligarch Ivanishvili, who placed him in

charge of the Georgian government, to allocate two billion dollars for initiating a criminal case against me. Putin held a grudge against me for supporting Ukraine's first Maidan in 2004 and for preventing his army from entering Tbilisi while defending Georgia's sovereignty in 2008. Subsequently, the war broke out, and I became Putin's personal prisoner.

I have been subjected to poisoning and torture by them. They are now trying to unjustly prosecute me based on fabricated accusations.

I express my gratitude to President Zelensky and his office for consistently and publicly advocating for my rights. Ukraine, recognizing me as a Ukrainian citizen, has formally requested

my extradition. Additionally, the European Parliament unanimously passed a resolution demanding my release, referring to my arrest as a "personal vendetta of an oligarch".

As for Zourabichvili, she is distinguished by her hypocrisy and never does what Ivanishvili does not like. Georgia was blamed for the 2008 war. However, sometimes she says the right things. Now she is simply begging for an invitation from Zelensky. Zourabichvili is Ivanishvili's toy, which he uses to confuse the West and Ukraine. It is enough to recall that he demanded my conviction for the "attack on Tskhinvali (i.e., Russia)" in 2008. She welcomed armed provocations from Russia in every possible way.

She now plays a role similar to that of Hungary's president.

I understand that any supportive words are important now, but Ukrainians should not be deceived. Behind this woman's empty words is Ivanishvili's active cooperation with Russia in evading sanctions.

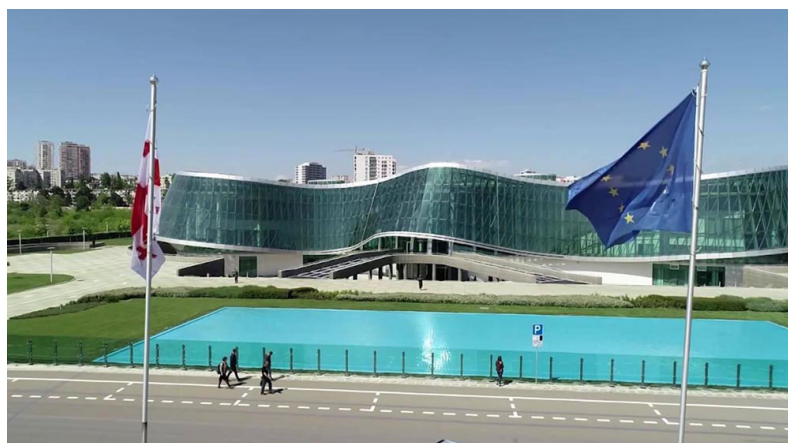
The presence of Kadyrovians in Georgia has become more frequent, as well as officers from the aggressor country's special services.

Zourabichvili may toast to the occupation and Europe, but when it comes to me as Putin's personal prisoner, as well as other vitally important issues, she does not differ in the slightest from the Russian party line," Saakashvili wrote.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER  
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### Arrest of the Assailant of Zura Japaridze Confirmed by Ministry of Internal Affairs



The Ministry of Internal Affairs has confirmed the arrest of the attacker who targeted Zura Japaridze, the leader of "Girchi - More Freedom" party. The case has been initiated under Article 126 of the Criminal Code, which pertains to violence.

Earlier today, during a seminar organized by the 'Liberal Academy' in Borjomi, Zura Japaridze was attacked near Gori's 'Smart' while en route to the event.

Subsequently, Soso Maisuradze, a resident of Gori, admitted on social media that he was the one responsible for physically assaulting Japaridze.

According to the party's information, Zura Japaridze, the leader of "Girchi - More Free-

dom," was assaulted in Gori.

"We were on our way to the camp and made a stop at 'Smart' in Gori. While the girls went into the store, Japaridze, who was alone in the car, was attacked by an unstable individual. The incident happened rapidly, and Zura sustained an injury in the eye area. It is disheartening to live in a country where such incidents occur," wrote Ana Kurashvili.

### EU Ambassador to Georgia Condemns Politically Motivated Violence against Zurab Japaridze

Pawel Herczynski, the European Union Ambassador to Georgia, strongly condemned the politically motivated violence against Zurab Japaridze, the

leader of the "Girchi - More Freedom" party in Gori. Speaking to journalists, the ambassador



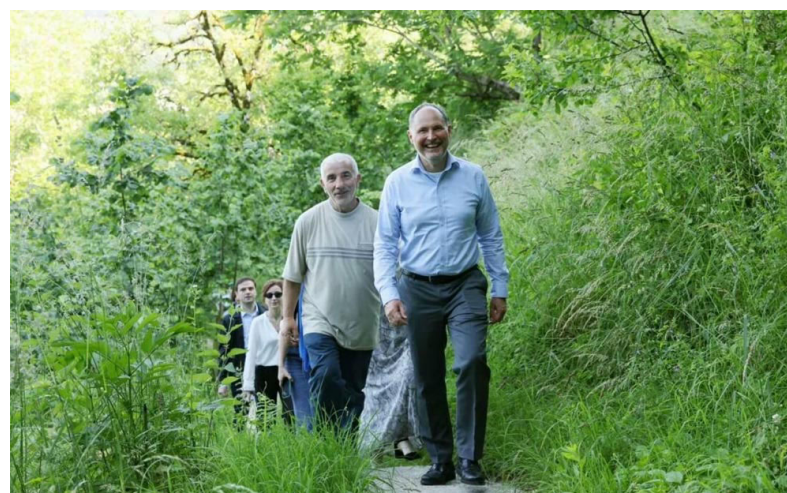
emphasized that such acts of violence are inadmissible and unacceptable in any democratic country.

While acknowledging that he has read the reports about the incident, Ambassador Pawel

Herczynski expressed his uncertainty regarding the specifics of what occurred. However, he emphasized the importance of conducting a thorough investigation into the matter. The ambassador reiterated that politically motivated violence should never be tolerated and expressed his hope that the situation in Georgia will never deteriorate to such a level of violence.

"I've read the reports, but I'm not entirely sure about what happened. I hope that this incident will be thoroughly investigated. What I can confidently state is that politically motivated violence is unacceptable; it is unacceptable in any democratic country. I sincerely hope that the situation in Georgia will never deteriorate to the point of such motivated violence," said Herczynski.

## EU Ambassador to Georgia visits Adjara to highlight cooperation projects



EU Ambassador to Georgia Pawel Herczynski visited the Adjara region last week to foster stronger ties between Adjara and the European Union.

The visit encompassed a wide-ranging agenda, including meetings with government officials, civil society representatives, businesses, media representatives, and youth.

During his visit, Ambassador Herczynski inaugurated the Euroclub in Qeda, contributing to the region's development and educational opportunities. The

Qeda Euroclub was an initiative of the Young European Ambassadors (YEAs), who operate within the framework of the EU-funded programme EU NEIGHBOURS EAST.

The visit also highlighted the EU's dedication to supporting grassroots initiatives, local entrepreneurship, and sustainable rural development. Ambassador Herczynski had the opportunity to visit local businesses, including the Nuri Sirabidze Wine Cellar in Qeda, supported through FAO initiatives, and the 'Woodhide' guesthouse in Machakhela National Park, supported through ENPARD and UNDP programmes.

([euneighbourseast.eu](http://euneighbourseast.eu))

## Weather

Monday, June 19

Day ☀️ Clear  
High: 29°C

Night 🌧️ T-storm  
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, June 20

Day 🌧️ Rain  
High: 23°C

Night 🌧️ T-storm  
Low: 17°C

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