

## EU and Georgia Celebrate 9<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of EU-Georgia Association Agreement

By Liza Mchedlidze

The EU and Georgia are celebrating the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. The EU representation's press release emphasized that this milestone further strengthens the partnership and bond between the European Union and Georgia. They also highlighted the importance of the reforms based on this agreement as significant steps towards Georgia's full membership in the European family.

"Today we celebrate the 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, a milestone that strengthens the bond between us as partners. The reforms based on this agreement are important steps towards Georgia becoming a full member of the European family. Congratulations to Georgia on this special day!" EU in Georgia wrote.

In his Facebook post, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili acknowledged the noteworthy milestone of Georgia attaining associate membership in the European Union exactly 9 years ago. He described this momentous occasion as both an impressive achievement in its own right



and a significant stepping stone towards Georgia's ultimate integration into the European Union.

"Exactly 9 years ago, Georgia

became an associate member of the European Union. This historic event, in itself, marked the beginning of other achievements—a consistent move to

towards the final integration of Georgia into the European Union. The free trade agreement gave our entrepreneurs the opportunity to export their prod-

ucts to the European Union without any barriers. The ever-increasing dynamics of trade have tangible consequences for the well-being of our people.

The possibility of free movement in the European Union with a Georgian passport, which was brought about by the agreement on the visa-free regime, is also particularly important for our citizens. On March 3 of last year, I signed Georgia's application for EU membership. The continuation of this process was the granting of a European perspective to Georgia by the European Union; For the first time in our history, Europe has publicly and unequivocally declared that Georgia will become a member state of the European Union.

Before this, after a long period of stagnation, this achievement achieved in less than 10 years is the result of the joint efforts of our government and a large part of society. I believe that this process will continue at the end of the year with the well-deserved recognition of these efforts and the granting of the candidate status, which will become the beginning of the decisive stage of Georgia's accession to the European Union," noted the Prime Minister.

## Irakli Kobakhidze Announces Plans to Override President Zourabichvili's Veto on Changes in Election Code

By Liza Mchedlidze

Irakli Kobakhidze, the Chairman of Georgian Dream, told journalists that in all situations, there is a necessity to override President Zourabichvili's veto, even for technical reasons. He noted that there is an interest in deliberately creating an institutional crisis within the Central Election Commission (CEC).

According to Kobakhidze, the implemented changes in regulations must be upheld to avoid a mere procedural election of the CEC chairman and members. He expressed concern over an apparent interest in sabotaging and creating an artificial institutional crisis within the CEC. The initial purpose of the clause in the April 19 agreement was to generate such a crisis, which led to the revision of the draft. The same interest persists, warranting the need to override the veto.

Kobakhidze pledged to provide explanations for their decision and continued consultations if required. The focus now is on overriding the veto, with readiness for discussions and arguments.

"In all cases, we will need to override the veto, including for technical reasons. The changes in the regulations related to this procedure have already been implemented. Therefore, if the veto is not overridden, it will turn out that there is simply a procedure by which the CEC chairman and members will be elected for technical reasons. However, the main concern is that in this case, we see an interest in sabotage—an interest in artificially creating an institutional crisis in the CEC. At the time when the corresponding clause was included in the April 19 agreement, the purpose of this clause was to create an institutional crisis in the CEC. That is why we did not sign the first draft and only signed the revised version. We see exactly the same interest now, and that's why we need to override the veto. We will explain to everyone the reasons for our decision. Also, if there is a need for consultations somewhere, there is still time, and we will continue consultations. At this point, there is simply a veto to override. Then, if there are any arguments, re-



quests for consultations, and so on, we are ready for consultations," Kobakhidze noted.

Kobakhidze further emphasized that the veto of the president does not align with the content of the April 19 agreement.

"Imagine if the president vetoed it, and this veto also does not correspond to the content of the April 19 agreement. Therefore, this agreement is merely a pretext. The April 19 agreement holds no value for us. Firstly, it has been invalidated and no longer carries any political significance. Secondly, let's not forget that the April 19 agreement was the outcome of sabotage and support for such actions. Thus, from both political and moral perspectives, the April 19 agreement holds no value for us. Furthermore, considering these developments, we have declared that we will never again engage in negotiations of this nature, and we will not enter into an agreement resembling the April 19 agreement. Instead, we will hold consultations with EU structures on all matters, without any objection," stated Kobakhidze.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Holds Meeting with David O’Sullivan, James O’Brien, and Kumar Iyer

United States and Kumar Iyer from the United Kingdom, both representing their respective countries.

The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the visit of the EU Special Representative to Georgia and highlighted its significance, particularly considering that the Georgian delegation

nity regarding the financial sanctions imposed on Russia. Significant importance was given to the effective performance of Georgia’s relevant agencies in preventing sanctions evasion, as well as highlighting the successful cooperation between Georgia and the EU, as well as the USA, in this endeavor.

Vakhtang Gomelauri Meets with Hungarian Minister of Internal Affairs, Sándor Pintér

ensure their effective implementation.

The parties also expressed their willingness to take appro-



Irakli Gharibashvili, the Prime Minister of Georgia, held a meeting with David O’Sullivan, the International Special Representative responsible for overseeing the enforcement of European Union sanctions. Also present were Ambassador James O’Brien from the

had consistently expressed their eagerness for strong collaboration with the Office of the Special Representative during the meetings in Brussels.

According to the press release, the meeting centered around Georgia’s continuous efforts to align with the European Union and the international commu-

Furthermore, it was highlighted that the international community, including the US State Department, positively acknowledges the efforts undertaken by Georgia. Special attention was given to Georgia’s unwavering support for Ukraine in both political and humanitarian spheres.



Vakhtang Gomelauri, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia, held a meeting with Sándor Pintér, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Hungary, as part of his official visit to Hungary.

“At the meeting, the parties discussed bilateral cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of both countries.

During the meeting, the significance of existing bilateral agreements in the field of law enforcement between the governments of Georgia and Hungary was emphasized, along with the prospects of future cooperation to

appropriate measures to facilitate the exchange of experiences and best practices between their respective agencies.

Vakhtang Gomelauri provided his Hungarian counterpart with detailed information about ongoing and implemented reforms in the Ministry.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Vakhtang Gomelauri expressed gratitude to the Minister of Internal Affairs of Hungary for his hospitality and conveyed hope for the continued robust cooperation between the parties across various domains,” the agency reports.

Georgia: EU and UNDP open Youth Centre in Shida Kartli region

A brand-new Youth Centre is now open in Kvemo Chala village, located in the Shida Kartli region of Georgia, alongside the administrative boundary line with the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

The Youth Centre was established by the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP) with the support of the European

Union and local grassroots NGO Kona (კონა).

It will host many educational programmes and civic engagement initiatives aimed at children and young people. The centre will also serve as a gathering place for older people, offering them a dedicated space for meetings and training sessions.

The Youth Centre was made possible through the EU4Dialogue programme, which contributes to the transformation of conflict-affected regions in the Southern Caucasus and the Republic of Moldova.

(euneighbourseast.eu)



Weather

Wednesday, June 28

Day ☀️ Clear High: 31°C

Night 🌧️ Partly Cloudy Low: 20°C

Thursday, June 29

Day 🌧️ T-storm High: 29°C

Night 🌧️ Partly Cloudy Low: 18°C

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