

## Georgia Has All Necessary Instruments to Join NATO, Affirms Chairman of the Parliament, Shalva Papuashvili

By Liza Mchedlidze

Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, said that the country possesses all the necessary instruments to join NATO and is fully compatible with NATO from a military perspective.

Papuashvili stated that NATO has no reason to prevent Georgia from advancing to the next stage in terms of the country's institutional development.

"When it comes to NATO membership, Russia's repeated aggression and the current regional situation in the European Union have shown us that if there is a border of peace anywhere, it is within NATO. We clearly see where the line of peace is drawn. Therefore, it is important that the aspirations of our people, in this case Georgia and the Georgian people, be covered by NATO's security umbrella and have an appropriate response from NATO. While it was stated in 2008 that the door to NATO is open, the open-door policy has remained just that, with little progress made. It is crucial to make advancements in this regard. Different arguments have been used at different times to justify the de-

cision not to grant the accession plan or move to the next stage. However, I believe that all these questions have already been answered. From a geopolitical standpoint, NATO member states themselves have also become convinced of the importance of greater clarity. Ambiguity, such as what we have experienced since 2008, only exacerbates the risks. More clarity is necessary. Concerning the readiness of states themselves in relation to Georgia, despite discussions about various reforms, I believe this is more of an excuse than a reason. In terms of our institutional development, NATO has no reason to withhold progress to the next stage," Papuashvili said.

Papuashvili highlighted that reliable international studies demonstrate Georgia's superiority over numerous NATO member countries in various areas. According to the Chairman, Georgia surpasses 15 NATO member countries in transparency, the fight against corruption, and economic freedom indices. Furthermore, Georgia ranks ahead of four NATO member countries in the rule of law and justice index. Thus, Papuashvili argued that the as-



sertion that Georgia lacks readiness for the next stage based on its democratic institutions is merely an excuse, lacking validity.

"In terms of military readiness, 80 percent of our military contingent has participated in various NATO events, including international missions, and is fully compatible with NATO standards. This has been ac-

knowledge by NATO itself. Furthermore, our contribution to security issues has at times exceeded that of certain NATO member states. As an example, I would like to mention the Afghanistan mission, where Georgia had the highest per capita contribution with its contingent and ranked fourth in absolute numbers. Some countries that are particularly critical of Geor-

gia in this regard didn't even send a tenth of the contingent that Georgia did to Afghanistan. Georgia has consistently fought for common values and peace, often exceeding the efforts of NATO member countries. It is therefore crucial that Georgia's commitment to NATO and its contributions be duly appreciated," stated Papuashvili.

Regarding the issue of Membership Action Plan (MAP), Papuashvili suggested that it has been repeatedly stated in relation to Georgia, and it is documented that Georgia possesses all the necessary tools to become a NATO member.

"We have all the relevant tools for the country to prepare and become a NATO member. Just like Finland and possibly soon Sweden, we have seen that these tools are merely conditional, with the readiness of the country and the political decision being the most important factors. If these two aspects are present, there is no need for MAP or other tools. The necessity of MAP for Georgia has been a matter of debate for a long time, and it has been explicitly acknowledged that Georgia has all the tools required to join NATO," Shalva Papuashvili said.

## Georgia's Progress and Germany's Support: Joint Statement by Chairman of the Georgian Parliament and President of the German Bundestag

By Liza Mchedlidze

Germany's policy and support have yielded tangible results, as Georgia has made significant strides in building democratic institutions and society, stated Shalva Papuashvili, the Chairman of the Parliament of Georgia, during a joint statement with Bärbel Bas, the President of the German Bundestag.

Papuashvili expressed confidence that Bas's visit to Georgia marked the beginning of a new stage in the partnership between the two countries.

"We are witnessing a historic event to-

day. We have the honor of hosting the President of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bärbel Bas, and her accompanying delegation. Germany has played a prominent role in the institutional and socio-economic transformation of our country since Georgia regained independence. Germany's policy and support have yielded concrete results, with Georgia now being a state that has made tremendous progress in building democratic institutions and society. We express our gratitude to Germany and its people for their contributions. We are also thankful for Germany's support of Georgia's sover-

eignty and territorial integrity, as our current statehood and sovereignty are thanks to Germany and its friends and partners," Papuashvili stated.

He further highlighted the active dynamic of deepening the political dialogue between the two countries, citing various high-level meetings and visits between Georgia and Germany.

"The high-level reciprocal meetings and visits, such as the one today with the President of the Bundestag, reflect the close relations between our peoples and the extensive cooperation in culture, economy, defense, education, transport, energy, science, and other fields. These relationships have enriched and strengthened our friendship and partnership for centuries," Papuashvili added.

According to Papuashvili, the ties between Germany and Georgia are based on shared values of democracy and peace.

"The ties between Germany and Georgia serve common goals and interests. Georgian and German soldiers supported each other for years at the Mazar-i-Sharif base in Afghanistan, fighting for these values and interests, for the peace and security of Europe, and for the well-being of the people of Germany and Georgia," Papuashvili emphasized.

Regarding Georgia's European path, Papuashvili expressed hope that Germany, as a leader, would support Georgia's integration into the European

Union by granting it the status of a candidate country.

The President of the German Bundestag, Bärbel Bas, reaffirmed Germany's support for Georgia on its European path. Bas highlighted the partnership relations between the two countries in various fields and the close cooperation between their parliaments.

"Our countries enjoy partnership relations in various fields, with close cooperation between our parliamentarians. The German Bundestag's assistance is diverse, including projects implemented within the framework of the Eastern Partnership with 'GIZ,' and we aim to intensify these projects. The cooperation between the heads of our parliaments will continue in Berlin. Germany has been running a parliamentary scholarship program for a long time," said Bas.

Bas also mentioned her plan to visit the occupation line during her visit to Georgia, emphasizing that Georgia has experienced the impact of Russian aggression, particularly in light of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Furthermore, Bas addressed the attempted disruption of the Pride Festival and highlighted that such actions violate the freedom of assembly and the rights of minorities, which are integral parts of European values. She encouraged Georgia to continue implementing reforms, assuring Germany's support on Georgia's European path.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

United National Movement Urges Establishment of Investigative Commission to Address Overcoming President's Veto

The United National Movement has emphasized the necessity of establishing an investigative commission in Parliament to address the matter of overcoming the President's veto.

According to the chairman of the fac-



tion, Tina Bokuchava, the majority did not have enough deputies to vote to overcome the veto.

"Very often, the majority does not have

a quorum in Parliament, and very important decisions are made against the background of unauthorized sessions. Among them was the decision to overcome the veto of the President, which concerned a very important state institution - the election administration. We believe that a special commission should be created to study this issue," she said.

Mamuka Mdinardze, the chairman of the faction the Georgian Dream, responded to Bokuchava and asked to familiarize with the regulations. He noted that the chairman of the parliamentary group/faction can express a claim regarding the voting by following the relevant procedure.

Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili Meets with President of German Bundestag Bärbel Bas

The Prime Minister of Georgia, Irakli Gharibashvili, held a meeting with the President of the German Bundestag, Bärbel Bas.

The focus of the discussion was on the existing relations between Georgia and Germany, as well as the potential for future cooperation.

Acknowledgment was made of Germany's contribution to Georgia's institutional and socio-economic transfor-

mation, along with their support in implementing reforms that pave the way for European Union membership.

The meeting emphasized the progress Georgia has made towards EU accession, including ongoing reforms aligned with the recommendations of the European Council. Germany's unwavering support for Georgia's aspirations to join the EU was highly valued. The Prime Minister reiterated the government's firm commitment to European integration and highlighted Georgia's endeavors to fulfill the

12-point recommendations of the European Commission.

The Prime Minister expressed gratitude to the President of the German Bundestag for Germany's support in safeguarding Georgia's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and policy of non-recognition. The significance of Germany's involvement in the EU observation mission and their active participation in the implementation of the NATO-Georgia essential package, both in terms of expertise and financial support, was underscored.



German Government supports Georgian municipalities in improving public finance management system

On July 11, the German Government funded project "Good Financial Governance in Georgia" implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH held its official launch meeting at Rooms Hotel Tbilisi. In a strategic partnership with the Ministry of Finance of Georgia (MoF) and eight Georgian municipalities (Akhaltsikhe, Dusheti, Telavi, Ozurgeti, Rustavi, Keda, Khashuri, Kharagauli) the goal of the project is to support the public finance management system in Georgia, especially at the local level while including local and national framework conditions. Representatives of central and local governments, as well as various international donor organizations attended the meeting.

"Since many years the German Government has ensured strategic support to Georgia in public finance management reform processes. Within the German-Georgian Develop-

ment Dooperation through the Georgian Ministry of Finance, a number of important reforms have been implemented, including the introduction of a financial motivation system for municipalities and a VAT tax sharing formula between central and local budgets, that aims at handing over more financial resources to municipalities. In the framework of the Good Financial Governance project it is planned to support the ongoing reforms, as well as to implement new initiatives. In the end this will contribute to more results-oriented, accountable and participatory spending of local finances in the country." - Giorgi Kakauridze, Deputy Minister of Finance of Georgia stated during the launch event.

"Georgia has made significant progress in the field of public finance management. Especially noteworthy is the country's achievement in the Open Budget Survey where Georgia was ranked 1st among 120 countries in terms of budget transparency and oversight. However, we all recognize that there are remaining challenges to be addressed, especially at the local level. I am strongly convinced that GIZ's Good Financial Governance Project financed

by the German Government will - in close cooperation with Georgia's Ministry of Finance, Georgia's Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, municipalities and other development partners - significantly contribute to the reforming process towards a more results-oriented, gender-sensitive and participatory public financial management system in Georgia" - Lidjia Christmann, Head of Development Cooperation at the German Embassy to Georgia.

Since 1992, commissioned and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), GIZ has been actively supporting Georgia in the areas of good governance and democracy, sustainable economic development as well as environment and climate change, among others. In line with this, GIZ started the above-mentioned new bilateral technical assistance project "Good Financial Governance in Georgia" on April 1, 2023.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Finance of Georgia and the already named eight Georgian municipalities GIZ this way continues its assistance to foster results-oriented, gender-sensitive and participatory budgetary processes at the local level.



Weather

Wednesday, July 12

Day Clear High: 28°C
Night Clear Low: 15°C

Thursday, July 13

Day Clear High: 30°C
Night Clear Low: 16°C

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