

By Liza Mchedlidze

Charles Michel: Preparation Needed on Both Sides for the 2030 Expansion

Speaking at the strategic forum in Bled, Slovenia, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, discussed the imperative of EU enlargement. He specifically mentioned a date, asserting that both the EU and potential member states should ready themselves for the year 2030. When addressing expansion, Michel specifically highlighted Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia.

Michel emphasized that "the enlargement of the European Union is no longer a dream."

"Ukraine and Moldova were granted candidate status in June of last year. The same status awaits Georgia upon their completion of the necessary steps. Therefore, expansion is no longer a dream; it is time to move forward. Much work remains to be done, and the path may be challenging and occasionally painful for both the future member states and the European Union," Charles Michel stated.

The President of the European Council suggested that when shaping the future strategic agenda of the European Union, it's important to establish a clear goal.

"I believe we should be ready - from both sides - for the 2030 expansion. This means that the EU's long-term budget must include our common goals, it is ambitious but necessary, it shows that we are serious. It will add momentum, it will add transformative momentum to the reforms. This will lead to interest, investments and better mutual understanding," said Michel.

He also noted that the European Union needs to expand in order to strengthen and protect itself.

"In order to become stronger and more secure, the EU needs to strengthen ties and move away from power. Therefore, now is the time to embrace the challenge



of enlargement, not just for us, but for the EU and our future member states as well. Yes, I believe that is the appropriate term for countries that have embraced the European perspective. It's time to eliminate uncertainty and squarely confront challenges with hon-

esty.

The Western Balkans began their journey towards the EU two decades ago—a region at the heart of Europe, surrounded by EU nations, yet one that endured conflict following the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The 2003 Thessaloniki summit reaf-

firmed the European perspective for the Western Balkans. However, the sluggish progress toward EU membership has led to disillusionment among many, both within the region and within the European Union," stated Michel.

Georgian Dream Assisting Kremlin's Soft Power Expansion in Georgia, Khatia Dekanoidze says

By Liza Mchedlidze

Khatia Dekanoidze, a deputy of the 'Eurooptimists' political group, responded to Medvedev's recent statements about Georgia and indicated a link with the upcoming elections. She added that it is important for Russia that the ruling 'Georgian Dream' party remains in power, as it 'assists' them in soft power expansion.

According to Dekanoidze, both the Georgian government and the Kremlin will employ numerous threats in the lead-up to the pre-election period. As she pointed out, Russia desires an even broader expansion within Georgia.

"It is the Kremlin's ambition that, despite facing daily setbacks in Ukraine, they have devised a formula for success, which involves a broader expansion through the utilization of soft power in Georgia and

Moldova. We witness Russia's attempts in Moldova and observe its endeavors in Georgia as well," Dekanoidze stated.

Dekanoidze finds it regrettable that the "Georgian Dream is contributing to Russia's efforts to extend its soft power influence in Georgia, considering Russia's intention to further implement soft power strategies within the nation.

"It's regrettable that the Georgian government is assisting Russia in extending its soft power influence within Georgia. I believe that the threats posed by Medvedev, Putin, and the Kremlin are linked to their desire for more effective soft power implementation in Georgia, especially while Ivanishvili and the "Georgian Dream" party hold power. I particularly connect this with the upcoming elections, just a year away. It holds great significance for Russia that this government retains power, even though it seems nearly unattainable. I am confident that both our government and the Kremlin will employ a multitude of such expansion-oriented threats leading up to the elections," stated Dekanoidze.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President Zelensky Envisions Ukraine's Victory Contributing to Restoration of Territorial Integrity in Georgia and Moldova



In an interview with journalist Natalya Moseychuk during a telethon, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky remarked that Ukraine's triumph in the war with Russia would play a role in restoring the territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova. "I believe that Ukraine's victory will signify the conclusion... I will be very happy for the people of these states... Ukraine's political victory will provide the opportunity to make decisions, establish democracy, and contribute to the restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia and Moldova," Zelensky stated.

Medvedev Highlights 'Pragmatic' Approach of Georgia's Current Government and Developing Relations

In an interview with RT, Dimitri Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, observed that the current government of Georgia is marked by its 'pragmatic' approach. However, he criticized President Salome Zourabichvili for her 'categorical opposition' to the development of the country's economy.

"Everything happens in politics, so pragmatism is very important. Everyone has emotions, but emotions should be set aside when making decisions. Here, today's generation of Georgia is distinguished by pragmatism; this cannot be ignored. That's why we develop relations with them, that's why we allowed visa-free travel, that's why planes started flying.

Here is the current president of Georgia - I don't know if she speaks Georgian or not. She is a French who categorically opposes the development of her country's

economy. But now, such politicians cannot play the primary role. Given that Georgia is a parliamentary republic, the role of the current president is minimal. I hope that the Georgian government will have the pragmatism to recognize the realities, including the existence of South Ossetia, and sort out relations with them," said Medvedev.



Court Orders Continued Detention for Lazare Grigoriadis Following March Protests

The Tbilisi City Court has ruled to keep Lazare Grigoriadis, who was arrested during the March protests, in custody.

While the defense side requested to replace the pre-trial detention with bail, and the prosecution side requested to maintain Grigoriadis in pre-trial detention, Judge Zviad Sharadze decided to continue the pre-trial detention for Grigoriadis.

During the session, four experts from the expert forensic department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs were questioned as witnesses. They examined the damages of Lazare Grigoriadis and the policeman's clothes, as well as the car that was burned during the March protests.

One of the chemical experts who examined the policeman's clothes had to determine whether there were traces of petroleum products on them. Expert Maka Pitskhelauri, presented as a witness at the trial, informed the judge that the examination revealed traces of oil products on the policeman's clothes.

The next trial for Lazare Grigoriadis is scheduled for September 22 at 4:00 p.m.



Georgia: Youth from Kaspi, Adigeni and Batumi learn to identify and verify misinformation

Young people from Kaspi, Adigeni and Batumi, Georgia, gained practical skills to identify and verify harmful information in modern media during interactive media literacy trainings organised with EU support.

Participants learnt how to



check the credibility of information sources, photos and videos. They also learnt how to verify geolocation information using a special online tool.

Media literacy trainings are conducted throughout Georgia under the EU-supported programme 'Quality Media and Conscious Media Consumption for a Vibrant Society'.

The project is implemented by the DW Akademie in cooperation with the Media Development

Foundation (MDF) and Human Right Centre (HRC) aims to strengthen democracy and support human rights in Georgia by increasing public awareness and understanding of media freedom, media and information literacy, and the harmful effects of disinformation.

The programme will last until 1 September, 2025 and aims to organise more trainings on disinformation.

You can sign up for training by email: info@mdfgeorgia.ge

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, August 29

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 31°C

Night T-storm

Low: 20°C

Wednesday, August 30

Day Rain

High: 26°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 19°C

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