

## Ilia Darchiashvili Optimistic About Georgia's EU Candidacy Status, Affirms Commitment to Align with EU's Foreign Policy

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili, indicated that a significant phase is underway concerning the status of Georgia. He mentioned that by the upcoming week, they are anticipating the European Commission's conclusion, which is considered pivotal and will influence the decision by the European Council in December.

According to Darchiashvili, his optimism stems from the fact that Georgia has achieved concrete and tangible results.

"Our optimism originates from the efforts we've made, resulting in concrete and tangible outcomes discussed during Borell's visit to Georgia, including additional internal technical matters addressed during the visit. The subsequent steps taken have elicited strong signals from Brussels. Therefore, we are optimistic and hope for the European Union to make the right decision. In current discussions, partners emphasize that geopolitical decisions from the EU will be a significant factor, alongside decisions based on merit. This gives us cause for optimism as we eagerly await the conclusion, which we will all soon witness together," stated Ilia Darchiashvili.

Darchiashvili, stated that Georgia will continue its efforts to closely align with the foreign policy priorities of the European Union regarding global matters. He also emphasized that the Georgian government prioritizes the country's interests, particularly when it pertains to issues of territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"I want to clarify that when our partners mention foreign policy alignment, they refer to the fact that the European



Union, being a large union, issues statements on global events, wars, and numerous challenges. In terms of foreign policy alignment, Georgia has maintained an 87 percent alignment with international organizations in recent years. As for the European Union's foreign

policy statements, our alignment currently stands at nearly 50%, and we intend to continue this alignment in the future.

We are guided solely by our own interests when it comes to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of our country. This is an issue that often necessitates further discussions to safeguard our ter-

ritorial integrity and sovereignty. We are actively collaborating with the European Union in this regard. They are aware of our dedicated efforts, and Georgia will continue to align as closely as possible with the foreign policy priorities of the European Union concerning global affairs," said Ilia Darchiashvili.

## 50 Georgian MPs Appeal to NATO and the EU Concerning Russian Base in Occupied Ochamchire

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

50 opposition MPs in the Georgian parliament have made an appeal to NATO and EU countries concerning the Russian bases in the occupied region of Ochamchire in Georgia. In their statement, they strongly condemn Russia's occupation of Georgian territory, militarization, and any actions aimed at annexation.

The statement is a call for international attention and support to address Russia's actions in Georgia, particularly in the occupied regions of Abkhazia and De facto South Ossetia, and to safeguard Georgia's sovereignty, security, and democratic development.

MPs strongly denounced Russia's occupation, militarization, and efforts aimed at annex-

ation in occupied regions of Georgia such as Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. They highlighted Russia's decision to permanently station its navy in Ochamchire in Abkhazia as a cause for concern, affecting not only Georgia's sovereignty but also regional and international security.

They stressed the threat Russia poses not only to Georgia but to the entire Black Sea region and the Euro-Atlantic space due to its aggressive actions. The placement of the Russian military fleet in Ochamchire is seen as a potential obstacle to the Middle Corridor project initiated by the EU.

"We unanimously and resolutely condemn Russia's occupation, militarization, and any



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7152; Euro - 2.8865; GBP - 3.3098; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.9085; Swiss Franc - 3.0052

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actions directed at annexing the occupied regions of Georgia - Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region. This condemnation extends to the recent decision to permanently station the Russian Navy in the port of Ochamchire in occupied Abkhazia and the attempt to integrate these regions into the Russian-Belarus union.

We believe that Russia's decision poses an additional challenge, not only to Georgia's ter-

ritorial integrity and sovereignty but also to the security of the broader Black Sea region and the Euro-Atlantic space. The permanent basing of Russia's military fleet in Ochamchire port, within occupied Abkhazia, poses a threat to the Middle Corridor project initiated by the European Union, especially as Georgia awaits the European Union's decision on its candidate status," the statement reads.

The MPs called on Georgia's allies and strategic partners to take a united stand against

Russia's occupation and annexation policy. They urge international support as crucial for Georgia's development and security.

They expressed their readiness to work closely with other legislative bodies to protect the rules-based international system and fundamental international law.

They emphasized that their statement represents the united position of the parliamentary opposition due to the ruling party's refusal to adopt a joint

resolution in parliament.

"We urge the international community, Georgia's allies, and strategic partners to take a unified and resolute stand against Russia's continued occupation and annexation policy, which is crucial for Georgia's democracy, security, prosperity, and long-term peaceful development.

We call for the international community to recognize and effectively utilize the decision of the European Court of Human Rights regarding the August 2008 war between the Russian

Federation and Georgia, and its aftermath, as an instrument to combat Russia's occupation and human rights violations in the occupied regions of Georgia - Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.

We reiterate our readiness to continue intensive and proactive cooperation with legislative bodies and parliamentary assemblies to coordinate efforts in safeguarding the rules-based international system and fundamental norms of international law."

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Justice Minister Rati Bregadze Announces Apprehension of All Three Escapees



All three escapees from the 'Aversi' clinic have been apprehended. Minister of Justice Rati Bregadze has disseminated this information.

Bregadze expressed gratitude to Minister of Internal Affairs Vakhtang Gomelauri and the police for their unwavering support.

"All three criminals have been arrested! The search operation was successfully completed in close coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

I extend my gratitude to my friend, the Honorable Minister of Internal Affairs, Vakhtang Gomelauri, and the police for their tremendous support.

I also want to thank our employees who, alongside the police, executed all necessary measures with high professionalism, ensuring the safety of our citizens.

The offenders will be punished

accordingly.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone who wished us success.

This almost 24-hour incident should serve as a lesson for anyone contemplating illegal actions against the law enforcement system, which is dedicated to ensuring Georgia's security and protecting human rights," wrote Bregadze.

Additionally, a corrections officer was detained in connection with the case.

### Saakashvili Refuses State Security Service Testimony Request Following 'Russian Subversive Groups' Statement

Former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili stated that,

following his court statement about the entry of Russian subversive groups into Georgia, the State Security Service requested his testimony.

Saakashvili stated that he declined to testify because 'he is in unjust and illegal detention resulting from cases initiated by Federal Security Service agent Otar Fartskhaladze'.

"I announced my information in order for the public to be careful. We are not a big country. We can register all suspicious groups, and when they move to active action, we will block and neutralize them through public activity. There are times when civil society must take matters of public safety into its own hands. Then, it becomes possible to join forces, including with the remaining

honest patriots in law enforcement, and save the country and ourselves," Saakashvili wrote, adding that he refuses any co-



operation with "the current FSB branch", likely referring to the State Security Service of Georgia.

EU Ambassador to Georgia Pawel Herczynski this week visited Nadarbazevi and Kitsnisi villages in the Shida Kartli region, meeting with farmers who have benefited from FAO activities supported by the EU in the region.

Cereal and dairy farmers, as well as beekeepers, had the opportunity to share their experiences with Ambassador Herczynski and explain how, within the ENPARD rural development programme, funded by the EU and Sweden, the FAO has helped them toward improved food security, food safety and economic development.

## Georgia: EU ambassador visits farmers benefiting from EU support in Shida Kartli



The current phase of the programme has helped over 200 cereal farmers plant 1,500 hect-

ares of land in Georgia. As a result, improved access to no-till farming equipment has de-

creased production costs. Importantly, their fields have become more resilient to environmental risk factors and climate change. FAO has also trained over 2,000 farmers in food safety standards.

"I am delighted that the European Union, together with the FAO, is improving Georgian agricultural techniques and methods in order to protect the environment and to help Georgian farmers to be more profitable," said Ambassador Herczynski. "The ENPARD project has been an important contributor to the country's agricultural development. We are glad to be working with farmers, food businesses, and state institutions to

collaboratively strive toward more sustainable and cost effective agriculture in Georgia."

Aiming to reduce rural poverty, ENPARD has been implemented since 2013. The Programme started by supporting the development of national agriculture potential. Afterwards, it concentrated also on creating economic opportunities for rural populations in Georgia. Since 2021, the Programme has also been working on improving food safety in the country, with additional support from Sweden, and with the FAO and the Czech Development Agency as the main implementers of this food safety component.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Friday, November 3

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 20°C

Night Cloudy  
Low: 10°C

Saturday, November 4

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 21°C

Night Clear  
Low: 10°C

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