

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Prime Minister Kobakhidze to Attend URC2024 Conference in Berlin

Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Kobakhidze, accompanied by world leaders, will attend the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2024) in Berlin on June 11-12. This information has been disseminated by the government administration.

The main objective of the event, as stated by the administration, is to garner international support for Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction, reforms, and modernization efforts. URC2024 will delve into four thematic areas: mobilizing the private sector for recovery and economic growth, social recovery and human capital for Ukraine's future, restoration of municipalities and regions, and accession to the European Union and related reforms. Additionally, discussions will encompass topics such as macroeconomic stability, sustainability, security, infrastructure, housing, energy, environmental protection, healthcare, and education.

The conference will be attended by heads of state and government, ministers, representatives of international organizations and financial institutions, as well as business and civil society organizations. Notably, this high-level political event is hosted for the first time by a member state of the European Union.

Prime Minister Kobakhidze traveled to Berlin alongside a delegation comprising Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili and Head of Government Administration



Levan Zhorzholiani.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Ilia Darchiashvili, emphasized the significance of Prime Minister Kobakhidze's

visit to Berlin and participation in the Ukraine aid conference. He stated that Georgia is steadfast in its support for Ukraine, particularly in light of its cur-

rent state of war. Darchiashvili noted that the Prime Minister will deliver a specific address during the roundtable format of the conference, further under-

scoring Georgia's commitment to aiding Ukraine within its means.

TI Georgia: Anti-Corruption Law Amendments Fail to Meet European Commission Requirements and Worsen Existing Rules

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Transparency International Georgia asserted that the amendments made to the anti-corruption law, adopted in the third reading in parliament on May 29, 2024, cannot meet the requirements of the European Commission and worsen the existing rules.

"According to the explanatory note of the package of changes initiated by the deputies of the parliamentary majority, the draft law aimed to fulfill the recommendation issued by the European Commission to Georgia on November 8, 2023. Among the nine conditions for the opening of EU accession negotiations, one referred to the further promotion of the effectiveness of the anti-corruption bureau and the further improvement of its institutional independence and impartiality.

However, the adopted amendments do not take into account any of the critically important recommendations of the European Commission and the Venice Commission, including the parliamentary appointment of the head of the anti-corruption bu-

reau and the granting of investigative powers to the bureau. In addition, in several areas, the legislative changes worsen existing regulations and raise questions about compliance with the Constitution of Georgia. In some cases, they include provisions that were not recommended by either the European Commission or the Venice Commission and simultaneously worsen existing practices," the statement reads.

TI highlighted some particularly noteworthy changes adopted in the third reading:

Cancellation of Party Registration

Political parties can now be deregistered by an appeal to the Public Registry from the head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau. If a party fails to submit financial statements to the Bureau for two consecutive years or if its financial statements show zero income and expenses for two consecutive years, the Anti-Corruption Bureau may appeal to the Public Registry for the party's abolition, with its assets transferred to the state budget. TI-

ანტიკორუფციულ კანონში შეტანილი ცვლილებები ვერ კასუსობს ევროკომისიის მოთხოვნებს და უპარესებს არსებულ წესებს

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8490; Euro - 3.0584; GBP - 3.6160; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2000; Swiss Franc - 3.1765

TI Georgia: Anti-Corruption Law Amendments Fail to Meet European Commission Requirements and Worsen Existing Rules

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Georgia emphasizes that this contradicts the Georgian Constitution, which reserves such powers for the Constitutional Court.

Access to Special Category Personal Data Amendments grant the Bu-

reau the authority to request personal information, including special categories such as race, ethnicity, political opinions, beliefs, etc., from public entities, individuals, and legal entities. TI-Georgia questions the necessity and purpose of this provision, especially since it was not included in the original draft amendments.

Limiting Declaration Publicity

The amendments allow the Bureau to withhold the publication of declarations containing errors for up to two months, contrary to international standards promoting transparency.

Exemption for the Anti-Corruption Bureau

Changes exempt the head of the Anti-Corruption Bureau from requiring government approval for determining the agency's budget, staff list, salary fund, allowances, and spending limits for fuel and communication costs.

New Powers for the Anti-Corruption Bureau

The Anti-Corruption Bureau is now empowered to develop and implement programs on ethics, integrity, and accountability in the public service, as well as to study and generalize compliance with ethical norms by public servants and develop corresponding recommendations.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

US Embassy Confirms Cancellation of American Military Participation in May 26 Event Due to Ivanishvili's Statement



The US Embassy confirmed that the participation of American military personnel in the May 26 event was canceled following a statement by Bidzina

Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream. This clarification was issued in response to a query from the media platform Publika.

"The US participation in the government event on May 26 was canceled due to the ruling party's false narratives

about the US, as presented in the April 29 statements of the honorary chairman of Georgian Dream.

The US remains a strong supporter of

Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity and wants to see Georgia firmly integrated into the Euro-Atlantic community. We call on the Georgian government to return to this path," the Embassy stated.

Geostat Report: 64.4% Decrease in Foreign Direct Investment in Georgia, Q1 2024

Preliminary data from the National



Statistics Office of Georgia reveals that foreign direct investment (FDI) in the first quarter of 2024 totaled \$201.4 million, a significant 64.4 percent drop compared to the same period in 2023. This decline is attributed to decreases across all three components of FDI: share capital, reinvestment, and debt obligations.

Breaking down these components, share capital amounted to \$75.9 million, representing 37.7 percent of the total FDI. Reinvestment reached \$92.5 million, accounting for 45.9 percent.

Turkey was the leading investor, contributing \$42.4 million, or 21.0 percent of the total. The Czech Republic followed closely with \$41.5 million (20.6 percent), and the United States with \$33.7 million (16.7 percent). Collectively, the top five investor countries accounted for 85.5 per-

cent of the total investment volume.

Sector-wise, the energy sector attracted the highest FDI in the first quarter of 2024, receiving \$78.7 million, which is 39.1 percent of the total. The trade sector followed with \$39.5 million (19.6 percent), and the transport sector with \$38.8 million (19.3 percent).

Planting trees and testing water: EUMM joins local partners to celebrate World Environment Day

On 5 June, the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia marked World Environment Day by organising a series of outreach activities in its three Field Offices.

EUMM monitors, together with experts from the Rural Communities Development Agency (RCDA), visited a school near the Prezeti IDP Collective Centre and conducted interactive sessions with schoolchildren,



including a drinking water quality workshop. The students also participated in an environment-themed art contest, with winners receiving special gifts from

EUMM. In another initiative, EUMM partnered with the NGO CENN and organised a clean-up drive with pupils from three schools

near the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL). The collaborative effort successfully removed over 100 kg of waste, contributing to a cleaner environment for the conflict-affected population.

EUMM also donated plants to Zugdidi botanical garden, specifically selected based on the needs of the garden and participated in their planting together with botanical garden staff.

"Through these activities, EUMM underscores its commitment to sustainable use of natural resources, especially in the villages near the ABL, where sustainable practices are particularly important due to the socio-economic challenges faced by the conflict-affected communities," EUMM said in a press

release.

EUMM is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission of the European Union, deployed in September 2008 following the EU-mediated Six Point Agreement which ended the Russian war against Georgia in August 2008. The mission headquarters is in Tbilisi, with field offices in Gori, Mtskheta and Zugdidi.

Since its deployment, the mission has been patrolling day and night, especially in the areas adjacent to the ABL with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Some 200 observers from different EU member states are on the ground.

(eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, June 11

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 28°C

Night Showers
Low: 19°C

Wednesday, June 12

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 29°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

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