

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Participates in Ukraine Recovery Conference in Berlin

By Liza Mchedlidze

On Tuesday, June 11, Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze of Georgia participated in the Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC2024) in Berlin alongside world leaders. The event's primary objective was to mobilize international support for the recovery, reconstruction, reforms, and modernization of Ukraine.

Kobakhidze attended the conference with a Georgian delegation that included Minister of Foreign Affairs Iliia Darchiashvili and Head of Government Administration Levan Zhorzholiani.

According to the government's press center, Kobakhidze delivered a speech at the working meeting of the heads of state, chaired by German Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In his speech, Prime Minister Kobakhidze reaffirmed Georgia's steadfast support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. He emphasized Georgia's readiness to contribute significantly to Ukraine's restoration efforts.

Kobakhidze highlighted several key actions that Georgia has undertaken to assist Ukraine:

Diplomatic Support: Georgia has been a proactive initiator, signatory, or supporter of over 600 resolutions, statements, joint statements, and other initiatives by international organizations and institutions in support of Ukraine.

Humanitarian Aid: More than 1,000 tons of humanitarian cargo have been sent to Ukraine, with aid from the Georgian government exceeding 35 million GEL.

Support for Ukrainian Refugees: Georgia is currently assisting 26,000 Ukrainians affected by the war, who are living in Georgia. Post-2022, Ukrainians



displaced by the war receive the same financial assistance as Georgians displaced by Russian occupation.

Educational Support: Over 2,300 Ukrainian students have been integrated into Georgia's education system, with most receiving secondary education in the Ukrainian language.

Youth Camps: In the summer of 2024, Georgian youth camps will host

Ukrainian children, particularly those from the families of Ukrainian Armed Forces and National Guard servicemen in Kharkiv and Kyiv. These children, accompanied by authorized guardians, will enjoy a safe and friendly environment in Georgia's regions.

Prime Minister Kobakhidze also addressed the issue of sanctions against Russia. He clarified that while Georgia

did not introduce national sanctions against Russia following the start of Russia's military aggression in Ukraine, "all relevant state agencies strictly control the sanctioned persons and cargoes".

Kobakhidze noted that the "Georgian government maintains close coordination with the European Union, Great Britain, the USA, and other states to ensure the enforcement of sanctions."

Estonian Parliament Urges Sanctions Against Georgian Government and Law Enforcement Officials

By Liza Mchedlidze

The Estonian parliament has issued a statement condemning the recent adoption of a "Foreign Agents" law by the majority of the Georgian parliament, asserting that it contravenes European values. The statement garnered support from 57 MPs, with 13 opposing it.

The statement highlights that the law draws inspiration from the Russian Federation's "Foreign Agents" law, utilized by Putin's regime to suppress civil society, media, and political opposition.

Calling on the Government of Georgia, the Parliament of Estonia urges an end to violence against rally participants, the civil sector, and opposition representatives. It demands a thor-

ough legal investigation into violence against peaceful demonstrators and emphasizes the importance of upholding human rights, the rule of law, and implementing EU-agreed reforms as prerequisites for accession talks.

Estonia deems it necessary to suspend Georgia's EU accession negotiations, halt development cooperation with state agencies, and redirect funds to support civil society until the crisis is resolved, reforms are reinstated, and the "Foreign Agents" law is repealed.

Riigikogu urges the Council of the European Union to impose sanctions on Bidzina Ivanishvili, Georgian government members, and Parliament, including a ban

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The Riigikogu adopted Statement on crisis of democracy in Georgia

11.06.2024 / Press releases, Foreign Affairs Committee

Today, the Riigikogu (Parliament of Estonia) issued a Statement in which it condemns the actions of the Government and the parliamentary majority of Georgia in adopting the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence and abandoning the European values.

57 members of the Riigikogu supported and 13 voted against the adopting of the Statement of the Riigikogu "On the Crisis of Democracy in Georgia" (449 AE), submitted by 44 members of the Riigikogu.

In the Statement, the Riigikogu points out that despite widespread protests, calls from the EU and Georgia's allies and a veto by the President of Georgia, on 28 May the Parliament of Georgia, with the votes of the ruling party Georgian Dream, passed the Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence, which is inspired by the Russian Federation's so-called Foreign Agents Law



See the latest information

> 44 members of the Riigikogu submitted draft Statement on crisis of democracy in Georgia 03.06.2024

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8646; Euro - 3.0763; GBP - 3.6504; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.2128; Swiss Franc - 3.1942

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on EU entry.
Estonian Parliament intends

to propose EU sanctions against Georgian security forces and law enforcement involved in suppressing peaceful protests and

repressing opposition and civil society. If this proposal fails, Riigikogu recommends Estonia enforce national sanctions, in-

cluding a ban on entry into the country, against the aforementioned individuals.
Moreover, the Estonian Par-

liament supports suspending the EU-Georgia visa regime until the "Foreign Agents" law is repealed.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

President Salome Zourabichvili Condemns Prime Minister's Remarks in Front of Georgian Army



On June 11, during a meeting with young people, President Salome Zourabichvili addressed a question about the Georgian army, expressing her concern over remarks made by the Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze. She emphasized that labeling the president a traitor in front of the troops constituted an "unprecedented insult to the Georgian army".

"When the prime minister dares to call the president a traitor in front of the troops, it is an unprecedented insult to

the Georgian army, because this president is its supreme commander-in-chief," Salome Zourabichvili remarked.

"I want to apologize to them on behalf of the prime minister and assure them that everything will be done to strengthen the Georgian army and uphold the legacy

of our country now has the opportunity to pursue," said Zourabichvili.

Public Defender Urges Prompt Investigation into Attacks on Citizens and Human Rights Defenders

It is necessary for the state to give a strict and appropriate response to each violent incident to prevent such cases from becoming mass organized persecution and violence, and to discourage such actions in society.

The Public Defender also emphasizes that defamatory statements made by poli-



The Public Defender of Georgia responded to recent attacks against citizens, including human rights defenders, and urged relevant bodies to investigate these incidents promptly.

"Today, on June 11, the information was spread about the physical attack on civil activist Zuka Berdzenishvili. The incidents of physical retaliation against citizens are alarming, especially if the reason for the attack is related to their professional activities or expressed opin-

ions. It is necessary for the state to give a strict and appropriate response to each violent incident to prevent such cases from becoming mass organized persecution and violence, and to discourage such actions in society.

The Public Defender of Georgia calls on investigative bodies to immediately respond to the incidents of physical attacks on citizens and to inform the public about the measures taken," the statement reads.

EU should begin accession talks with Ukraine by the end of June, von der Leyen tells Ukraine Recovery conference in Berlin

Opening the Ukraine Recovery conference taking place on 11 and 12 June in Berlin, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the



EU "should begin accession talks with Ukraine already by the end of this month".

She also announced that Euro1.5 billion in proceeds from immobilised Russian assets would become available this July: 90% of these funds will go to Ukraine's defence, 10% to reconstruction. Von der Leyen

added that later this week, the G7 Summit would further discuss "how Ukraine can benefit even quicker from the proceeds of the immobilised Russian assets". She added: "We have always

said that Russia must be held accountable for its crimes. And now, we are making Russia pay." The European Commission president said the EU would sign in Berlin the first agreements worth Euro1.4 billion with its partner banks to attract investments in Ukraine from the private sector. The EU will also

launch dedicated support for equity investments in Ukraine: the EU's partner banks will be able to apply for EU budget support when they invest in equity funds active in Ukraine.

"Our aim is to improve access to finance for Ukrainian businesses, especially for SMEs and start-ups that can help modernise the Ukrainian economy, for example, in areas like IT and digitalisation, renewable energy, and critical raw materials. We will start with a pilot to address the most urgent needs, which can be scaled up over time," von der Leyen said.

The EU will continue to provide material support, in view of Russia's systematic attacks on Ukraine's energy grid. According to von der Leyen, the EU has

raised close to Euro500 million so far for urgent repairs. In addition, the EU is providing 1,000 more generators, and thousands of solar panels are about to arrive in Ukraine. "The aim is to help decentralise the power system and thus increase resilience," explained von der Leyen. She also announced that the EU would deliver to Ukraine an additional Euro1.9 billion from its Ukraine Facility by the end of this month.

"This is the first Ukraine Recovery Conference that is held inside the European Union. And this is where your country belongs. Kharkiv is Europe. Ukraine is Europe. And our Union is your home," Ursula von der Leyen concluded her speech. (eunighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, June 12

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

Thursday, June 13

Day Clear
High: 31°C

Night Clear
Low: 18°C

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**
Tamar Gachechiladze
Publisher

Mob.: +995 599 565621; +995 577 760000
E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
http://www.messenger.com.ge/

Nino Metreveli
Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
Editor-in-Chief

Khatuna Gogichaishvili
Layout Designer, Photographer

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