

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

EU's Borrell Criticizes Georgia's New Law, Warns of EU Integration Setback

The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, has issued a stark warning to the Georgian government, stating that the country's current political direction is steering it away from EU integration. Speaking at a press conference following the meeting of EU Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg, Borrell highlighted several concerning developments, including the recent adoption of the law "On Transparency of Foreign Influence".

"We had a lively debate about Georgia. After the Foreign Affairs Council in May, for the second time in a row, we discussed worrying political events in Georgia, including the adoption of the law 'On Transparency of Foreign Influence,'" Borrell said. He expressed regret over the misinformation about the EU and its values being spread by official Georgian actors and addressed claims by high-level Georgian officials that the new law would bring the country closer to the EU.

"I want to be clear: no, no! This law and all the negative developments around it are pushing Georgia away from the European Union. I can't be clearer and more concise," Borrell emphasized. He noted that this sentiment is supported by 26 out of 27 EU member states, underscoring the broad consensus within the EU regarding Georgia's current trajectory.

Borrell pointed out that the actions of the Georgian government contradict the will of the overwhelming majority of the Georgian population, who support closer ties with the EU. He stressed that unless the Georgian government changes its course,



the country will not progress on the path to EU integration.

"In parallel, we will increase support to civil society and the media. We will counter disinformation and increase support for the election process. I dis-

tributed the option paper, we will continue to monitor the situation and, if necessary, take measures, we will downgrade political contacts with Georgia. We will consider halting financial aid to the government and we will recon-

sider our support from the European Peace Facility. This can be done immediately, but we will continue looking at the situation and taking more measures if it further deteriorates," Borrell stated.

He concluded by reaffirming

the EU's commitment to the Georgian people: "I want to stress that we stand with the Georgian people and their overwhelming choice in favor of democracy and Georgia's future inside the European Union."

Georgian Dream Chair Defends 'Foreign Agents' Law Against Criticism



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Mamuka Mdinardze, the chairman of the Georgian Dream faction, addressed journalists after a meeting at the party's office, asserting that external efforts to undermine Georgia's new "Transparency of Foreign Influence" law will not succeed. Mdinardze emphasized that the government will not accept criticism regarding this legislation, which mirrors similar laws in Canada, France, and the United States.

"The forgery of the century financed from outside will not work as they want it to. We cannot and will not receive criticism from anyone for this," Mdinardze stated. He accused the opposition of labeling all independent government decisions as "Russian" in an attempt to discredit both the government and its supporters.

Mdinardze defended the "Transparency of Foreign Influ-

ence" law, arguing that it is no different from legislation in Western countries. "What was adopted by Canada and France, and what has been working in the USA for decades, cannot be Russia in Georgia," he said.

Georgian Dream Chairman expressed optimism about Georgia's future in the European Union. "We should expect that in 2030 Georgia will become a member of the European Union," he stated. He downplayed recent critical statements from EU representatives, urging a continued dignified path towards European integration in line with European values and Georgia's constitution.

Mdinardze criticized the lack of international protest against similar laws in other countries, highlighting what he perceives as a double standard.

"Do any of you remember rallies in Canada or slogans 'No to the Russian law' and 'Canada

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.8031; Euro - 3.0069; GBP - 3.5504; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1999; Swiss Franc - 3.1383

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can't become Russia's backyard? Or why did you not cover the rallies in France? Because

it did not happen. No one thought of baptizing a much stricter law in the similar field as Russian. Only in Georgia did it become 'Russian,' he argued.

He concluded by reiterating that the Georgian government will not be shamed into reversing its independent decisions. "What Canada and France

have adopted, what has been working for decades in the United States of America, cannot be Russian in Georgia, and the forgery of the century fi-

nanced from outside will not work as they want it to work. We cannot and will not receive criticism from anyone for this," Mdinardze asserted.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Estonian Foreign Minister Warns of Consequences for Georgia's EU Membership Aspirations



Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna issued a warning to the Georgian government regarding its EU membership prospects, stating that no further steps will be taken unless the government changes its behavior and repeals the controversial law on 'Foreign Agents'. Tsahkna made the remarks to reporters ahead of the EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting.

"The first, very important message is that there will be no further steps regarding Georgia's EU membership unless its government changes its behavior, unless its government repeals the law on foreign agents," Tsahkna said.

He also mentioned that the council

would discuss various measures affecting Georgia, including the potential prohibition of Schengen visas for high-level officials and other support funds. "So, the situation regarding Georgia is serious, and all this responsibility rests with the Georgian authorities, because the Georgian people support the path to the European Union," Tsahkna emphasized.

Public Defender Levan Ioseliani Reports Improvement in Mikheil Saakashvili's Condition



Public Defender Levan Ioseliani provided an update on the health of former President Mikheil Saakashvili following his visit to the VivaMedi clinic, where Saakashvili is currently held. Ioseliani noted that Saakashvili's physical condition has improved compared to his previous visit but did not discuss specific health details.

"I can't talk about Mikheil Saakashvili's health, although if we compare him physically with what I found during the previous visit, he looks much better today," Ioseliani told journalists. He also clarified that there was no discussion about Saakashvili's return to the

penitentiary, as this decision is outside his and the clinic's authority.

Ioseliani emphasized that his visit was part of a routine check on the health con-

ditions of all prisoners at the clinic. He reported that Saakashvili expressed gratitude for the Public Defender's ongoing monitoring of his condition.

"It was a short meeting. He thanked the Office of the Public Defender for regularly monitoring his condition throughout the year and providing information about it to the public," Ioseliani said.

Ioseliani also mentioned that no special requests were made by Saakashvili or other prisoners during his visit, and he noted that timely transfers to treatment facilities are sometimes delayed, a concern reflected in the Public Defender's report.

EU welcomes Armenia's proposal to establish bilateral mechanism to address alleged ceasefire violations

"The proposal of Armenia to establish a bilateral mechanism to address alleged ceasefire vio-



lations on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border to reduce tensions is to be welcomed," Toivo Klaar, the EU's special representative in the South Caucasus, wrote on 23 June on X (formerly, Twitter).

On 22 June, the Armenian Prime Minister's Office announced that the staff of the Prime Minister of Armenia had proposed to the staff of the President of Azerbaijan

through diplomatic channels to create a bilateral mechanism for investigation of cases of violations of the ceasefire regime. The office stated that the mechanism was proposed because the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Azerbaijan "periodically disseminates information that units of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia are violating the ceasefire regime".

Toivo Klaar added that the EU has for 15 years through the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) Georgia "helped organise similar meetings in Georgia and is ready to share its experiences."

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Tuesday, June 25

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 33°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 20°C

Wednesday, June 26

Day ☀️ Clear
High: 27°C

Night 🌙 Clear
Low: 16°C

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