

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Hosts EU Ambassadors to Discuss Georgia's EU Enlargement Steps

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia hosted representatives of the embassies of EU member states and partner countries on July 29, 2024. According to the Ministry's statement, a presentation was organized to discuss the implementation of the nine steps defined for Georgia in the European Commission's communication on enlargement policy, dated November 8, 2023.

"On July 29, 2024, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a presentation on the implementation of the nine steps defined for Georgia in the European Commission's communication on the enlargement policy of November 8, 2023. Ambassadors and representatives of embassies of EU member states accredited in Georgia and other partner states were invited to the meeting," the Ministry's statement reads.

After the meeting, Asuncion Sanchez Ruiz, Acting Head of the European Union Representation, noted the Council's conclusions, adopted by the 27 EU member states on June 27, which express the EU's concerns regarding de-



velopments in Georgia, particularly the "Law on Transparency of Foreign Influence." This law is seen as a step back for Geor-

gia on its path to EU membership and threatens its candidate status. The leaders urged the Georgian government to amend

this trend, which they argued could lead to the suspension of Georgia's EU accession process. "As High Representative Josep

Borrell stated, this was the official word: we have postponed and frozen 30 million euros from the European Peace Fund, reduced the number of high-level meetings, and are reviewing our aid to the government. Further statements will follow," said Sanchez Ruiz.

She emphasized that the European Union hopes the upcoming elections in Georgia will be free and fair. "The European Union is actively working for this country to become a member of the European Union. We stand by the Georgian people, who have expressed their desire to join the EU. We work for those Georgians who want to see this country in the European Union. We also hope that the upcoming elections will be free, fair, and competitive," Sanchez Ruiz added.

The Ministry's statement highlighted that the meeting also covered the progress Georgia has made on the nine steps outlined by the EU Commission. The presentation aimed to provide a comprehensive overview to the attending diplomats, reinforcing the importance of Georgia's path towards EU integration.



Maka Bochorishvili Advocates for Georgia's EU Membership at COSAC Conference

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Chairman of the European Integration Committee, Maka Bochorishvili, participated in the Conference of the European Affairs Committees of the National Parliaments of the European Union (COSAC), held in Budapest under the Hungarian Presidency of the EU. The Parliament's press office disseminated information about her involvement.

In her address, Bochorishvili emphasized the importance of the EU enlargement policy, regional challenges, and Georgia's ambition to join the European Union.

"Amid Russian occupation and its illegal military presence in two regions of Georgia, addressing increased threats without a security umbrella requires special efforts to maintain political stability and economic progress in the country. This ensures that EU membership does not remain

a distant dream for Georgian citizens but becomes a reality in the near future," stated Bochorishvili.

She highlighted the significance of EU accession negotiations with candidate countries and stressed the need for a prompt and smooth process for Georgia.

"Georgia has been a candidate country for the European Union since December last year, and we are grateful to the European Council for this decision. However, unlike other candidate countries, we are still awaiting the European Union's decision regarding the start of negotiations. We should immediately take the first steps and begin a dialogue on important issues to achieve our common interests and ensure the success of EU enlargement, which is also crucial for European security and prosperity," Bochorishvili added.

European Commissioner for Neighborhood Policy and En-

largement Oliver Varhej and Hungary's State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Peter Starai participated in the debate on EU enlargement.

The COSAC chairmen's meeting, hosted by Hungary in Budapest, saw the participation of the chairmen of the European affairs committees from the parliaments of the 27 EU member states and candidate countries, as well as representatives of EU institutions. The meeting was chaired by Zoltan Teshay, chairman of the European Union Affairs Committee of the Hungarian National Assembly. Hungarian EU Affairs Minister János Boka introduced the priorities of Hungary's EU presidency to the attendees.

During the conference, Maka Bochorishvili also held bilateral meetings with representatives of EU member and candidate countries, further discussing Georgia's path toward EU integration and strengthening partnerships.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Defends 'Foreign Agents' Law

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze defended the "Transparency of Foreign Influence" law during a recent appearance on Imedi TV, asserting that its primary

Kobakhidze stated. Kobakhidze emphasised two potential outcomes of the law's implementation. In the first scenario, where organisations comply and submit their financial declarations, the website will serve as a valuable tool for transparency. This would provide Georgian citizens with accessible and clear information about the financial activities of these organizations without

for gross violations of the law," Kobakhidze explained.

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze Meets with Public Defender Levan Ioseliani to Discuss Human Rights in Georgia

Levan Ioseliani highlighted the main activities and challenges faced by his office. He provided insights into the state of human rights in Georgia and the steps being taken to address various issues.

Kobakhidze underscored the importance of the Public Defender's role and emphasized the government's commitment to considering the Ombudsman's



practical benefit is the establishment of a centralized website. This site will allow Georgian citizens to access detailed information about the sources and uses of funding for various organizations.

"The only practical result of the 'Transparency' law is that a single website is created for the citizens of Georgia, where you enter, select an organization, and open information about where and for what this organization is financed. What could be wrong with that? Zero, nothing,"

any significant negative consequences. In the second scenario, if a substantial number of organizations fail to submit their required declarations, the law provides for penalties. According to Kobakhidze, organizations that do not comply will face fines. "Let's imagine that these organizations do not submit these financial statements. In this case, the only thing that happens is that these organizations will be fined, and the fines are quite mild - 25,000 GEL

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze met with the Public Defender of Georgia Levan Ioseliani, to discuss the current human rights situation and related issues in the country. The meeting, according to the Prime Minister's press service, focused on evaluating ongoing human rights protection efforts and addressing current challenges.

During the discussion, Public Defender

recommendations. He noted that these recommendations are crucial for further improving the standard of human rights protection in Georgia.

"The government pays great attention to the Ombudsman's recommendations, which serve to further improve the standard of human rights protection," stated Prime Minister Kobakhidze.

Advertisement for the festival 'ლიანის სერენადები' (Liana Serenades) with dates and venues: 21 AUGUST BORJOMI | Borjomi Likani Hotel; 23, 25 AUGUST BATUMI | Batumi Drama Theater; 15, 17, 18, 20 SEPTEMBER TBILISI | Tbilisi State Conservatoire. Includes logos for Alliance Art and other partners.



Weather section for Tuesday, July 30: Partly Cloudy, High: 29°C, Night: Clear, Low: 20°C.

Published by The Messenger, 43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia. Founded by Prof. Zaza Gachechiladze. Publisher: Tamar Gachechiladze. Contact: 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.

The Messenger welcomes your contributions. If you are interested in submitting an article or news item please contact. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail. The Messenger Georgia's English language daily is an independent newspaper, and,

therefore, the opinions expressed in some articles do not necessarily coincide with those of the newspaper. We take no responsibility for any claims made in advertisements. The Messenger preserves the style of a source written in English where possible.