

By Liza Mchedlidze

Belgian Company Selected for Anaklia Port Construction

Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze announced at a government meeting that the international tenders for the construction of Anaklia port have concluded, with a Belgian company being selected to perform the construction works.

Kobakhidze highlighted the significance of the state's recent victory in the arbitration dispute concerning the Anaklia port, emphasizing its importance in protecting state interests. He extended his gratitude to the Minister of Justice, Rati Bregadze, and the Ministry of Justice for their efforts in securing this win.

"The state won the arbitration dispute, which is very important. All this was very important for the protection of state interests. I would like to thank the Minister of Justice and the entire Ministry of Justice, everyone who was involved in this case. The state has been transparent about the Anaklia project when the consortium fails to fulfill its obligations. All conditions were created by the government for the consortium to implement the project, but you know that the consortium failed to fulfill its commitment. Against this background, they filed an arbitration claim, however, the Ministry of Justice duly protected the interests of the state, and in the end, the truth about the case was established. Thanks again to the Ministry of Justice for this," said Kobakhidze.

The Prime Minister also as-



sured that work is continuing to ensure the timely construction of the Anaklia port. The Belgian company selected is one of the largest in the field and will soon commence operations.

"Work continues to ensure

that the construction of the port of Anaklia is carried out in due time. International tenders have ended. A Belgian company was selected, which will carry out works directly related to the construction of the port. It is one of

the largest companies in this field, which will be launched very soon. Of course, one of the priorities for us is the development of Anaklia port, which is of particular importance for the development of the connectivity

function of our country, within the framework of the Middle Corridor initiative, to highlight our function in particular. Everything will be done for the successful implementation of this project," added Kobakhidze.

US Ambassador Calls for Restored Relations Amid Aid Suspension

By Liza Mchedlidze



US Ambassador to Georgia Robin Dunnigan expressed a willingness to restore relations with Georgia, urging the government to take significant steps to return to a pro-democratic course. This statement follows US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's announcement of the suspension of \$95 million in aid to the Georgian government due to concerns over anti-democratic actions.

Ambassador Dunnigan explained that the suspension is a response to several troubling actions by the Georgian government, including the controversial "Foreign Agents" law and false statements about the US. These actions have raised alarms about the government's commitment to democratic principles

and its relationship with the West.

"Let me begin by reiterating the absolute support of the United States government and the American people for the people of Georgia. We have been partners for 33 years. We have been working together for 33 years. We fought together. Together we helped build schools and clinics. We did this together to promote the path of Georgia's independence, sovereignty, and Euro-Atlantic integration. We will continue to do this for the people of Georgia," Dunnigan said.

Despite the suspension of aid to the government, the US remains committed to supporting the Georgian people. This includes ongoing assistance to students, teachers, farmers, small business owners, civic activists, civil society organizations, and the Georgian Defense Forces. "Our assistance to the Defense Forces of Georgia will also con-

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7133; Euro - 2.9271; GBP - 3.4673; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.1624; Swiss Franc - 3.0931

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tinue. As the Secretary of State said, everything is under consideration," Dunnigan added.

The ambassador highlighted that the European Union has also noted these anti-democratic actions and disinformation, leading to a pause in Georgia's EU

accession process. She stressed the importance of aligning with the aspirations of the Georgian people to join Western democra-

cies and expressed hope that the Georgian government would take necessary steps to mend relations.

"We are ready to restore this relationship. I hope the government will take important steps to return to the original course.

I want to repeat that we will always be a friend and partner of the people of Georgia," Dunnigan concluded.

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The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Russian Parliament Ready for Dialogue with Georgia, Says Matviyenko



Valentina Matviyenko, Chairwoman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, stated that Russia is ready for dialogue with Georgia, even at the level of parliaments, if the Georgians remain "friendly" to-

wards the Russians. "If there is a desire for dialogue on the part of Georgia, then we are ready even now, despite the fact that we do not have diplomatic relations. This is the mission of parliamentarians, they are elected for this,"

held in Georgia in October and, of course, they will determine the course of economic, social, and political development."

Matviyenko said that, despite the current situation in Georgia, Russia maintains respect for the Georgian people. "Georgian people are close to us, friendly to us. We will see how the election campaign will end," she noted.

According to her, the West is trying to interfere in the pre-election process of Georgia "using familiar scenarios and tools."

Giga Bokeria Resigns as Chairman of European Georgia Amidst Internal Disputes

Giga Bokeria has announced his resignation as the chairman of European Georgia. During a recent briefing, Bokeria cited significant disagreements within the party, primarily regarding the rules for conducting primaries, as the reason for his decision.

Bokeria explained that the conflict emerged over who should



be eligible to participate in the primaries. He argued that only those who openly support European Georgia should be allowed to participate. However, other party leaders, including the Chairman of the Political Council Gigi Tsereteli and General Secretary Akaki Bobokhidze, decided that undecided voters who did not want to publicly endorse the party could also participate. This decision led to a serious internal conflict.

Bokeria praised the primaries as a positive and competitive process, but noted that the results and his stance on supporting certain teams were unacceptable to some party members. He

emphasized that this internal discord, amid external accusations of "wasting votes and giving gifts to the regime," undermined the party's ability to run a successful election campaign.

Due to these disagreements and the unexpected value conflict with Bobokhidze and his supporters, Bokeria decided to step down from his position and withdraw from the parliamentary list and political team. He stated that he could no longer be responsible for the party's election strategy and would not seek reelection at the upcoming party congress scheduled for August 11.

EU appoints new EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia



On 26 July, the Council of the European Union appointed a new EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia.

Magdalena Grono will succeed Toivo Klaar, whose tenure of over six years comes to an end on 31

August. She will take up her duties on 1 September 2024 for an initial period of 12 months.

"As new EUSR, Magdalena Grono will continue the work of her predecessors, contributing to the implementation of the EU foreign policy objectives in the region. She will contribute to the peaceful settlement of conflicts, including the crisis in Georgia and the normalisation process between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in close coordination with the UN and the OSCE," the Council of the EU said in a press release.

According to the press release, Grono will engage with the main actors in the region and will develop contacts with governments, parliaments, other key political actors and civil society, encouraging and facilitating cooperation on regional themes of common interest.

Magdalena Grono, a Czech national, currently serves as Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the President of the European Council, Charles Michel. She has

worked on foreign policy and conflict resolution issues for the past 25 years, including in high-level diplomatic posts for the EU as well as in think-tank capacities, with a strong emphasis on the

former Soviet space and the South Caucasus in particular.

Before joining President Michel's Cabinet, she was a foreign policy adviser to former President of the European Coun-

cil Donald Tusk. Previously, she was the Europe and Central Asia Director at the International Crisis Group.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Friday, August 2

Day Showers
High: 26°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 19°C

Saturday, August 3

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 30°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 20°C

21 AUGUST
BORJOMI | Borjomi Likani Hotel

23, 25 AUGUST
BATUMI | Batumi Drama Theater

15, 17, 18, 20
SEPTEMBER
TBILISI | Tbilisi State Conservatoire

Founder of the Festival
LIANA ISSAKADZE

Artistic Director
GIORGI ISSAKADZE

AMANCE ART
არტ ალმანახი

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