

German Bundestag Delegation Expresses Concerns Over Georgia's EU Prospects During Tbilisi Visit

By Liza Mchedlidze

From September 4 to 6, a delegation from the Foreign Affairs Committee of the German Bundestag visited Georgia to discuss the country's political situation and its EU aspirations. The delegation, which included members from four German political parties—Deborah Düring (Alliance 90/The Greens), Jürgen Hardt (CDU), Ulrich Lechte (Free Democratic Party), and Nils Schmid (SPD)—met with Georgian opposition representatives, local think tanks, and civil society groups.

Interestingly, no senior government officials from Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party met with the delegation. Only Nikoloz Samkharadze, Chairman of the Georgian Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, engaged with the visiting MPs. The rest of the government, including Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze and Parliament Speaker Shalva Papuashvili, were occupied with other commitments, citing a graduation ceremony in Kutaisi as the reason for their absence.

During a press conference on September 6, Nils Schmid highlighted the delegation's concerns over Georgia's future, particularly its path toward European



Union membership. Schmid stressed that the upcoming parliamentary elections in October are crucial for Georgia's democratic future. He warned that without fair elections and significant political reforms, Georgia's chances of joining the EU remain slim. Schmid also noted that with the current government's policies, Germany

would not support Georgia's accession to the EU, urging reforms in areas like democracy, the rule of law, and civil society.

Other delegation members echoed these concerns. Jürgen Hardt reiterated that Germany remains committed to EU standards for enlargement, while Deborah Düring expressed disappointment that Georgia, once

a leader among EU candidate countries, has fallen behind due to recent policies. Ulrich Lechte regretted the lack of government engagement during the visit, mentioning that repeated requests for meetings were ignored despite the delegation's visit being planned well in advance.

In response, Prime Minister Kobakhidze explained that meet-

ings with the delegation were "not feasible," referencing a previous visit by Michael Roth, Chairman of the Bundestag's Foreign Affairs Committee, during which Roth participated in opposition-led protests. Kobakhidze stated that such actions were unacceptable, leading to the government's decision not to engage with the delegation.

Lavrov Defends Georgia's Foreign Agents Law, Criticizes Western Influence on LGBT Issues and Abkhazian Dispute

By MESSENGER STAFF

In an interview with Russian media outlet RBK, Russian

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov defended the adoption of the Foreign Agents law by Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream party.

He echoed the Georgian government's stance, asserting that countries like the U.S., Poland, and France, among others,

have stricter versions of such laws. Lavrov also criticized the West for allegedly imposing an "LGBT agenda" on Georgia and commented on the situation in occupied Abkhazia.

Lavrov claimed that the current actions of the Georgian government reflect their realization of national identity and Orthodox Christian values, which he argued are being threatened by the West's push for liberal democratic principles. He added that many Georgians are dissatisfied with the imposition of Western values, particularly regarding LGBT issues.

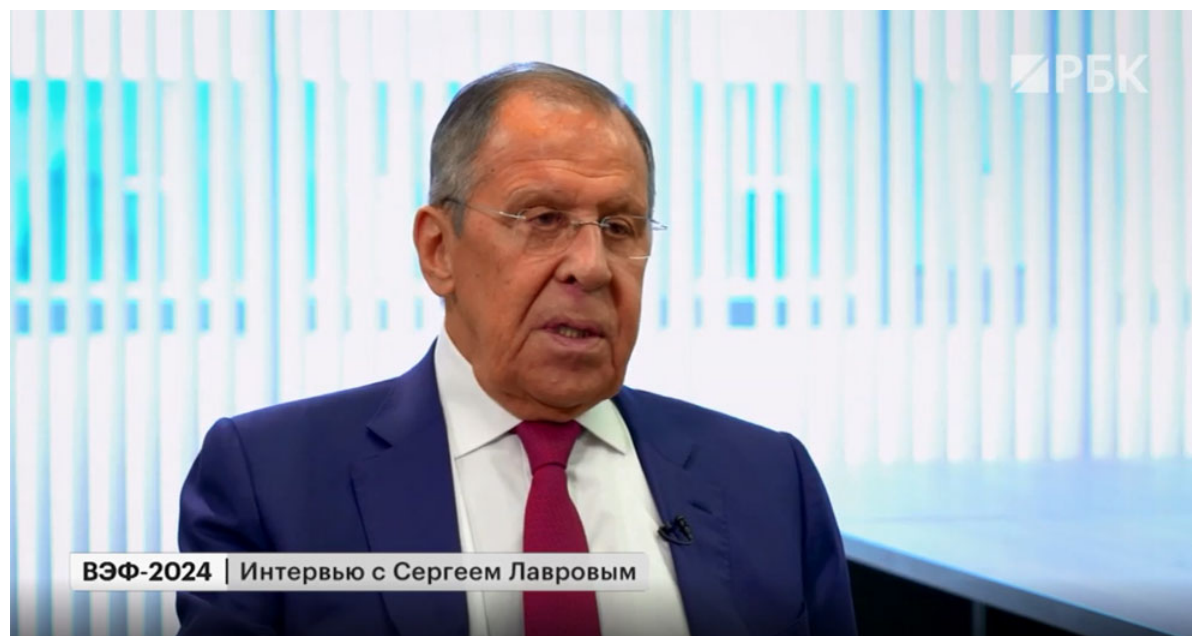
He expressed admiration for "Georgians' strong connection to their history," noting Georgia's cultural significance during the Soviet era. Lavrov also accused the West of "reproaching" Georgians for their efforts to preserve their historical and cultural heritage.

Touching on past negotiations, Lavrov referred to the 2005 agreement regarding the withdrawal of Russia's military bases from Georgia, in which Salome Zurbashvili, now Georgia's president, was his counterpart. He blamed the former United National Movement party and ex-President

Mikheil Saakashvili for failing to fulfill obligations, such as the creation of an anti-terrorist center involving Russian participation. Lavrov linked this to broader concerns about the reliability of negotiations with governments aligned with the West.

Lavrov further claimed that the Georgian example illustrates how many countries are realizing that "the West's push for liberal democracy" conflicts with the traditional values and heritage of Georgia. He accused the West of trying to undermine these traditions in order to maintain global dominance.

Regarding the recent suspension of funds to occupied Abkhazia by Moscow, following the de-facto authorities' refusal to pass the controversial "Apartment Law", Lavrov denied any worsening of relations between the Kremlin and the region. However, he stressed the need for both parties to uphold agreements signed between Moscow and Sokhumi, which outline obligations ratified by both parliaments. Lavrov emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance in fulfilling these commitments, stating that the "Abkhazian friends" are well aware of this.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Coalition of Georgian NGOs Launches Citizen-Led Election Monitoring Mission



A new coalition of non-governmental organizations in Georgia has launched a monitoring mission called My Voice, which aims to promote citizen participation in election observation. The coalition brings together about 30 organizations with experience in both local and international election monitoring.

Nino Lomjaria, former Public Defender of Georgia and founder of the platform European Orbit of Georgia, explained that the initiative was born from citizens' reaction to the controversial "Russian Law" and their desire to ensure fair elections. Lomjaria emphasized that the coalition will train citizens from all regions of Georgia, regardless of their profession or background, to participate as election observers.

"On the second day after the adoption of the 'Russian Law,' citizens began to unite around this initiative. This desire came from the citizens themselves. We, civil society organizations—about 30 in total—are responding to these expectations. We encourage the citizens of Georgia to participate in the observation process.

We are united by organizations and individuals with both local and international experience in observation, as well as knowledge of possible violations and election manipulations. We will train Georgian citizens, regardless of their profession, interests, or field of activity. Any citizen from any part of Georgia can register as an observer," said Lomjaria.

Schmid Calls for Repeal of Foreign Agents Law as 10th Step in Georgia's EU Membership Negotiations

According to Bundestag member Nils Schmid, the 10th point,

the repeal of the so-called Russian law, should be added to the 9-point plan for starting negotiations on Georgia's EU membership. He made this statement during a press conference held by the German Bundestag delegation visiting Georgia.



Schmid stated that under the current government policy, there is no possibility for Georgia to become a member of the European Union.

Schmid emphasized that this is an important opportunity to convey two clear messages. First, he stated that they expect the upcoming elections at the end of October to be fair and free, noting that these elections are critical for Georgia's democratic and European future. The decision on which path to follow rests with the Georgian people, and

they will fully respect the outcome of the elections. Schmid also acknowledged that the people of Georgia highly value and protect their democracy, urging every citizen to participate in the elections. He mentioned that international monitoring missions are in place and that they are closely observing how the election process will unfold.

"The second message is as follows: under the current government policy, there is no possibility for Georgia to become a member of the European Union. This was made clear by the EU when it halted the process of European integration. Any decision regarding the EU accession process requires the approval of the parliament, and our parties represent the vast majority of the German Bundestag. Given the current policies, Georgia will not receive the approval of the German parliament to open membership negotiations. Everyone knows the 9 steps that Georgia must take to start negotiations on EU membership. I want to tell you that we need to add a 10th step, and that should be the repeal of the foreign agents law, which is clearly at odds with European standards," the Bundestag member stated.

Kobakhidze Criticizes EU for Suspending Funding Based on 'Lies', Says Compensation is Minimal



According to Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze, "It is problematic when representatives of the European Union suspend funding based on a lie. A lie is very bad, and it does not reflect well on the representatives of the EU." This was his response to a question regarding the suspension of certain funding by the European Union following the adoption of the so-called Russian law.

He asserted that "the amounts in question are minor."

"As for the term 'Russian law', this is a lie, it's deception, and you know that very well. As for the funding, if something has been suspended, it will be easily compensated. We are talking

about very small amounts, and the fact itself is unfortunate. The fact that funding is being halted due to a lie is very bad, but since we are talking about such small amounts, compensating for this doesn't require much effort.

Today, we discussed that over the past four years, our budget has increased by 10 billion GEL, and in relation to all of this, the projects in question are just a drop in the ocean. There are no significant funds involved here, and compensation is easy. What is concerning and unfortunate is when representatives of the European Union take such actions based on falsehoods. It's minimal, and we will compensate for it.

For example, agriculture is one of the sectors where these funds are allocated. We are told that, across the country, the annual amount of EU funding is around 5 million euros, while the Georgian government spends 330 million GEL annually on the relevant projects.

We see the ratio here, and compensating for this is not a problem. The problem is when representatives of the European Union suspend some funding based on lies. Compensation is not the issue, but a lie is very bad, and it doesn't reflect well on the representatives of the European Union," said Kobakhidze.

Weather

Monday, September 9

Day Clear
High: 28°C
Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 18°C

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Master class Held for People with Disabilities Within the Framework of Festival “Night Serenades”

Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia and Liana Issakadze International Festival “Night Serenades”, artist-designer Nino

Mirianashvili conducted a workshop for the beneficiaries of the Union “Parent’s Bridge”. Supporters of the festival are: Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia, Min-

istry of Education, Culture and Sports of Adjara, Tbilisi City Hall, Batumi City Hall, Borjomi City Hall, Embassy of Italy in Georgia, Embassy of Brazil in Geor-

gia, and Czech Embassy in Georgia. The founder of the festival is Liana Issakadze, the artistic director of the festival is Giorgi Issakadze.





