

# The Messenger

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## President Zourabichvili Joins Tens of Thousands in Rally for Pro-Europe Georgia Ahead of Elections

By Liza Mchedlidze

On October 20, tens of thousands of Georgians gathered in a massive pro-Europe rally just days before the country's upcoming parliamentary elections, a pivotal moment for Georgia's democracy and its aspiration for European Union membership. The rally, held at Freedom Square in Tbilisi, saw the participation of President Salome Zourabichvili, who delivered a speech to the crowd.

In her remarks, Zourabichvili reflected on the significance of the day, noting a personal milestone: the birth of her grandson, Gabriel. "Today is one of those days in the history of Georgia that will be memorable for our children and grandchildren," she said. She described the birth as a symbolic sign of a new future for Georgia. "A new Georgia is coming. The Georgia that stands before me today is free Georgia."

The president emphasized



of the students came because they were told that 'if you don't, you won't get a scholarship', she asserted, highlighting the genuine desire of Georgians to embrace their European future.

Zourabichvili spoke of Georgia's long-standing connection to freedom, contrasting today's Georgia with the one that was once under Soviet control. She invoked the memory of Georgia's ancestors and its rich history of fighting for independence, affirming that "the free Georgia of our ancestors and our honorable history" would enter Europe together with today's Georgia.

Addressing Georgia's international allies, the president conveyed a message of unity, speaking directly to European and American partners, as well as to the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and the President of Moldova, Maia Sandu. "We will enter Europe together," she stated.

that the rally was a voluntary gathering, with no pressure or

coercion involved. "Nobody came here by force. No one has come

because they were told that 'if not, you will lose your job'; None



Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7157; Euro - 2.9457; GBP - 3.5426; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.8185; Swiss Franc - 3.1359



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

# Lavrov Invites Georgia to Rejoin 3+3 Platform Amid Regional Security Concerns

Following the 3+3 Regional Platform meeting in Istanbul on October 18, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized Russia's openness to Georgia's participation, stating, "The chair and the door are always open for them," and added, "As soon as Tbilisi decides, they can come and sit in their chair at any time."

When asked if he regretted Georgia's absence from the meeting, which he characterized as a missed opportunity for "almost direct Russian-Georgian contacts," Lavrov highlighted existing diplomatic channels. "We have contacts with Tbilisi; there is a Section of Russian Federation Interests at the Embassy of the Swiss Confederation in Georgia. Our diplomats work there," he explained. He noted that they have the opportunity to discuss current issues with relevant Georgian authorities,



primarily focusing on trade, tourism, and people-to-people contacts.

The 3+3 format, established in 2021 following the 2020 Karabakh war, brings together

three regional powers—Iran, Turkey, and Russia—along with two South Caucasus countries, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Notably, Georgia is not a member of this platform.

Lavrov reiterated that during the 3+3 format meeting, they confirmed that "the doors of this platform always remain open for Georgia," expressing hope that over time, Georgian neighbors will join its work.

On the topic of regional security threats, Lavrov echoed narratives from the ruling Georgian Dream party, claiming that "one of the serious problems is the well-known attempts by the West to open a 'second' front against Russia." He alleged that these efforts aim to destabilize situations in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The Russian Foreign Minister also accused "extra-regional players" of trying to "dictate their own terms" in the South Caucasus, asserting that such actions threaten the interests of

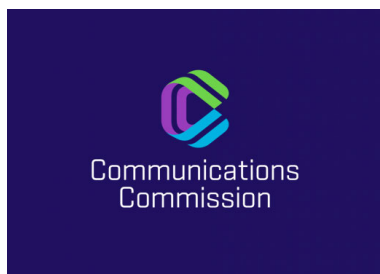
regional countries. He illustrated his point by referencing the recent Georgian government's passage of the foreign agents law, stating that "the EU immediately declared" Georgia was "no longer considered a priority partner for EU accession talks because it had violated 'European values.'"

Lavrov concluded by criticizing what he termed the West's attempts to maximize its influence in the region, which he argued undermines opportunities for equal and mutually beneficial cooperation between South Caucasus countries and Russia. He claimed that if "European values" include funding subversion and promoting the LGBT agenda, then it reflects poorly on those advocating for such values.

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### Communications Commission Rules Rustavi 2 Violated Election Code Over Political Ads



The Communications Commission of Georgia has recognized the television network Rustavi 2 as violating the Election Code for failing to broadcast the free political advertisement of the political union Unity - National Movement. As a result, the Commission has drawn up a protocol of administrative violations against the broadcaster.

The issue arose after the political union Unity - National Movement filed a complaint, stating that Rustavi 2 stopped airing their free political advertisements as of October 10. According to the complaint, the broadcaster had not made any formal public statement, unlike TV Imedi and PosTV which had both announced on the same day that they would no longer run political ads from opposition parties. However, the ads from the Unity - National Movement ceased airing on Rustavi 2

around the same time, leading to the complaint.

Georgia's Election Code mandates that during the last 50 days before elections, national broadcasters are required to allocate 7.5 minutes every three hours for free political advertisements. These slots must be distributed equally and without discrimination among all qualified election subjects.

After reviewing the evidence, the Communications Commission concluded that Rustavi 2 had breached the rules laid out in the Election Code. The broadcaster now faces administrative action as a result of the violation.

### National Bank of Georgia Sells Over 100 Million USD to Stabilize Lari

In the past two weeks, the

National Bank of Georgia (NBG) has intervened in the foreign exchange market, selling over 100 million US dollars in an ef-



fort to stabilize the Georgian lari. This move has contributed to the strengthening of the lari against major international currencies, including the US dollar and the Euro.

On October 16, the NBG sold USD 64.9 million in a foreign exchange auction. The bank attributed the sale to "large one-time transactions" that had been impacting the foreign exchange market and creating volatility in the lari's value. The NBG clari-

fied that the decision to sell USD was aimed at preventing excessive fluctuations in the market.

"These recent fluctuations in the foreign exchange market are not linked to macroeconomic factors and are therefore expected to be short-term," the NBG said in a statement.

The earlier intervention occurred on October 8, when the NBG sold USD 48.5 million, citing a surge in demand for foreign currency that was putting additional pressure on the lari's exchange rate.

This is not the first time the NBG has intervened this year. During protests against the Foreign Agents Law, the central bank sold a total of USD 168.7 million in one month to prevent a sharp devaluation of the lari. That amount exceeded all foreign exchange interventions made by the NBG in 2023.

## Weather

Monday, October 21

Day Mostly Cloudy  
High: 14°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 3°C

Tuesday, October 22

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 15°C

Night Mostly Cloudy  
Low: 4°C

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# *On the occasion of Spanish National Day, the Charge d’Affairs of Spain to Georgia, Mr. Marcos Granados Gomez held the Reception on October 15.*





