

## Bidzina Ivanishvili Nominates Mikheil Kavelashvili for President of Georgia

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

**B**idzina Ivanishvili, honorary chairman of Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party, has put forward Mikheil Kavelashvili, a former footballer and the member of the party's People's Power faction, as their candidate for the presidency. The announcement, made during a special briefing on November 27, has ignited discussion over Kavelashvili's qualifications, political stances, and lack of higher education.

Ivanishvili praised Kavelashvili as a figure who embodies "honesty, fairness, patriotism, and fidelity to principles," describing him as the ideal Georgian leader. "I am sure that Mikheil Kavelashvili will fully restore the temporarily stolen dignity to the presidential institute," Ivanishvili stated, emphasizing his confidence that Kavelashvili would focus solely on Georgia's interests and resist foreign influence.

Kavelashvili expressed his gratitude to Bidzina Ivanishvili for the "trust" and stated that his mission would be to restore the presidential institution to its "constitutional framework."

Kavelashvili is known

for his blunt and often controversial rhetoric. As a co-founder of the People's Power party, he has been a vocal critic of Western influence in Georgia, frequently targeting the United States. In 2022, he accused former U.S. Ambassador Kelly Dignan of supporting efforts to draw Georgia into the Ukraine war. His party also played a key role in drafting the "foreign agents" law, which sparked significant public outcry earlier this year.

Kavelashvili has gained a reputation for his provocative statements in parliament, including a 2022 incident where he used profanity to disparage opposition MPs. Recently, he has also directed criticism toward President Salome Zourabichvili, accusing her of being influenced by unnamed global forces.

Beyond his political stances, Kavelashvili's lack of higher education has become a focal point of public debate. Official parliamentary records show that he has not submitted proof of any formal education. This issue first came to light in 2015 when he challenged a Georgian Football Federation's rule requiring its president to hold a university degree, arguing that such requirements were unfair and outdated.



## German Ambassador Warns of Crisis in German-Georgian Relations and Stalled EU Integration

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

**T**he German Ambassador to Georgia, Peter Fischer, described German-Georgian relations as being in crisis, citing Georgia's stalled EU accession process, controversial government policies, and their impact on the country's economy and investment appeal.

In an interview with the UN Global Compact Network Georgia, Fischer called the relationship "an impasse", criticizing the Georgian government for failing to meet the EU's nine conditions for candidate status. He noted that the EU's decision to grant candidate status was a "sign of love and affection", but accused Georgia of backsliding since then. Fischer highlighted moves such as the reintroduction of the Foreign Agents law and anti-LGBTQ legislation as being in "gross contradiction" with EU values.



CONTINUED ON Page 2

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7422; Euro - 2.8856; GBP - 3.4582; 100 Russian Ruble - 2.5051; Swiss Franc - 3.1084

# German Ambassador Warns of Crisis in German-Georgian Relations and Stalled EU Integration

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Fischer also condemned accusations by the Georgian government against Germany and the EU, including claims of promoting "liberal fascism" or attempting to drag Georgia into the war in Ukraine.

The Ambassador underscored that the EU accession process has come to a standstill, contradicting the Georgian government's

claims that the process is ongoing. Referring to EU decisions from June and October, he said, "The leaders of the European Union decided and wrote down in their decision that the accession process has come to a halt... The candidate doesn't decide. So it's halted, and if you ask me, I don't see it coming back on track in the near future."

Fischer also criticized the conduct of Georgia's October 26 elec-

tions, which he described as incompatible with EU standards. He warned of the risk that Georgia might miss its opportunity for EU integration entirely.

The Ambassador highlighted the economic fallout of Georgia's stalled EU integration. Despite the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) in place since 2016, Fischer noted minimal growth in Georgian exports to the EU due to

non-compliance with EU standards, such as agricultural regulations.

He emphasized the EU's appeal as a structured, safe, and prosperous market that attracts investment, noting that closer alignment with EU frameworks could boost Georgia's business prospects. Conversely, he warned that drifting away from the EU undermines investor confidence, citing examples such as

Heidelberg Cement's withdrawal from Georgia.

Fischer pointed to broader economic risks, including the weakening of Georgia's currency, youth emigration, stock market instability, and lost investment opportunities.

"This crisis in EU-Georgia relations," Fischer said, "is not just a political issue—it's a missed economic opportunity for the people of Georgia."

## The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

### European Parliament Condemns Georgia's Recent Parliamentary Elections Amid Allegations of Electoral Fraud



## European Parliament

The European Parliament has strongly condemned the recent parliamentary elections in Georgia, citing widespread allegations of electoral fraud and violations of democratic norms. In a resolution adopted on 27 November 2024, the Parliament criticized the actions of Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream party, holding it accountable for the systemic backsliding in the country's democratic process.

The European Parliament's resolution highlighted numerous credible reports of election violations, including ballot stuffing, vote-buying, voter coercion, and violence. Observers noted that the ruling party had created an atmosphere of fear, especially targeting opposition figures, civil

society, and media. This environment, exacerbated by government-led disinformation campaigns, raised concerns about the fairness of the electoral process. Furthermore, the Parliament called for a full investigation into these allegations and expressed its refusal to recognize the election results.

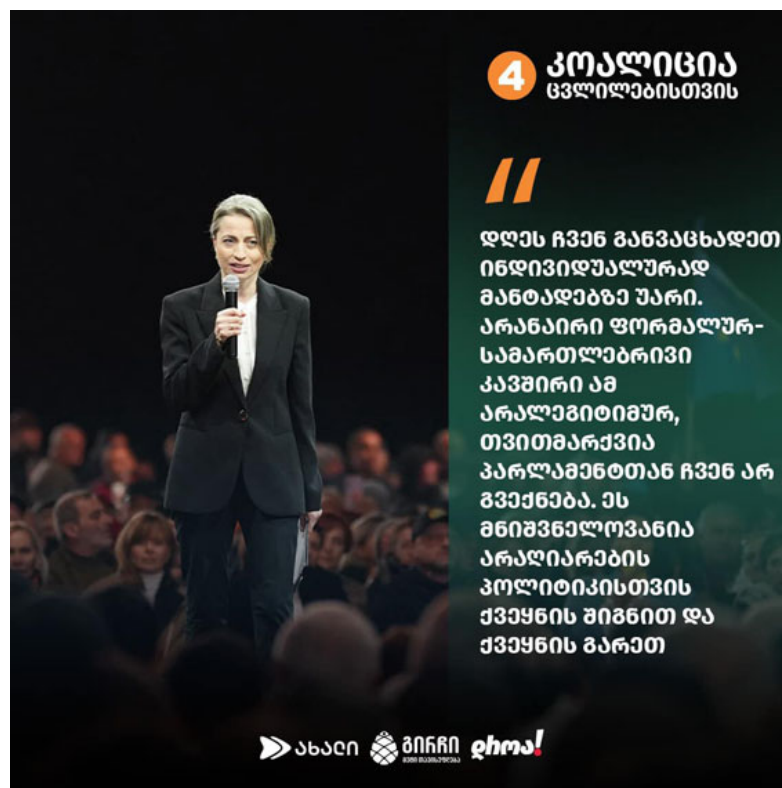
The resolution also criticized Georgia's Central Election Commission (CEC) for failing to ensure a fair process and for disregarding calls from civil society and opposition groups to annul the election results. Moreover, the European Parliament expressed its concern over Russia's interference in the elections, particularly through the promotion of divisive rhetoric by the Georgian Dream party, which aligned with Russian propaganda narratives. The Parliament called on Georgian authorities to resist foreign influence and to ensure transparency and fairness in future elections.

### Coalition for Change Leaders Demand Removal of Mandates, Seek Delegitimization of Parliament

The leaders of the Coalition for Change have appealed to Parliament, requesting the cancellation of mandates for their deputies. Each member submitted individual statements calling for the removal of parliamentary authority in the name of Shalva Papuashvili. On November 25, the 11<sup>th</sup> convocation of Parliament, dominated by the Georgian Dream party, recognized the authority of all 150 members, including 19 from the Coalition for Change. Nana Malashkhia, the

coalition's top candidate, stated that they have no intention of engaging in any formal legal relationship with the "so-called parliament". She acknowledged

needed. Nika Melia clarified the coalition's position, explaining that their actions are not about rejecting the representation of



4 კოალიცია ცვლილებებისთვის



დღეს ჩვენ განვაცხადეთ ინფორმაციულად მანდატებზე უარი. არანაირი ფორმალურ-სამართლებრივი კავშირი ამ არალეგიტიმურ, თვითმარქვია პარლამენტთან ჩვენ არ გვაქვია. ეს მნიშვნელოვანია არაღიარების პოლიტიკისთვის ქვეყნის შიგნით და ქვეყნის გარეთ

ახალი მიწი ენა

### Day of Remembrance for all Victims of Chemical Warfare: 'No one should use chemical weapons,' says Borrell

"Russia continues deliberately attacking civilian industrial facilities risking the expo-

sure of Ukrainian citizens to toxic chemicals," EU High Rep-

resentative Josep Borrell said in a statement today, ahead of the Day of Remembrance of All Victims of Chemical Warfare, celebrated annually on 30 November, since 2005.



Borrell also said that there was a growing number of reports of the use

of riot control agents by the Russian Federation against Ukrainian soldiers, adding that the use of these agents as a method of warfare is prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention.

"The Chemical Weapons Convention has eradicated an entire category of weapons of mass destruction through verified destruction of declared stocks, making it the world's most successful disarmament treaty. Yet, despite the progress made, the re-emergence of chemical

weapons continues to threaten international peace and security. We still witness the horrific consequences of these heinous weapons," Borrell said.

He also said that the European Union pays tribute to those who have died and suffered as a result of the use of chemical weapons, adding that "the global norm against chemical weapons must be enhanced and enforced".

(euneighbourseast.eu)

## Weather

Thursday, November 28

Day Cloudy High: 8°C

Night Mostly Cloudy Low: 5°C

Friday, November 29

Day Mostly Cloudy High: 10°C

Night Clear Low: 2°C

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