

OSCE Secretary General Visits Georgia Amid Concerns Over Political Legitimacy and Regional Security



BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

OSCE Secretary General Feridun Sinirlioğlu began his official visit to Georgia on April 22, with the trip set to continue through April 24, according to the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The visit includes meetings with ruling party officials and a planned inspection of the occupation line near Tskhinvali. No meetings with opposition representatives or civil society groups have been announced.

On April 22, Sinirlioğlu met

with Georgian Foreign Minister Maka Botchorishvili. In a joint press briefing following their discussion, Botchorishvili thanked the OSCE official for his visit, calling it a meaningful gesture toward strengthening OSCE-Georgia relations.

"Your visit to Georgia is an important message and step," she said, reiterating that Georgia values its membership in the OSCE and views European security and cooperation as priorities.

The Foreign Minister emphasized that the OSCE's effectiveness relies on member states

upholding international law and foundational principles. She highlighted regional challenges, especially Russia's continued occupation of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali (South Ossetia), and underscored the importance of maintaining Georgia on the OSCE agenda. She also welcomed the OSCE's role in the Geneva International Discussions and called for the resumption of the Gali Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM), which has been suspended since 2018.

"Georgia wants peace and sta-

bility in the region," she said, voicing support for the recent peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan and offering Georgia's help in regional peace efforts.

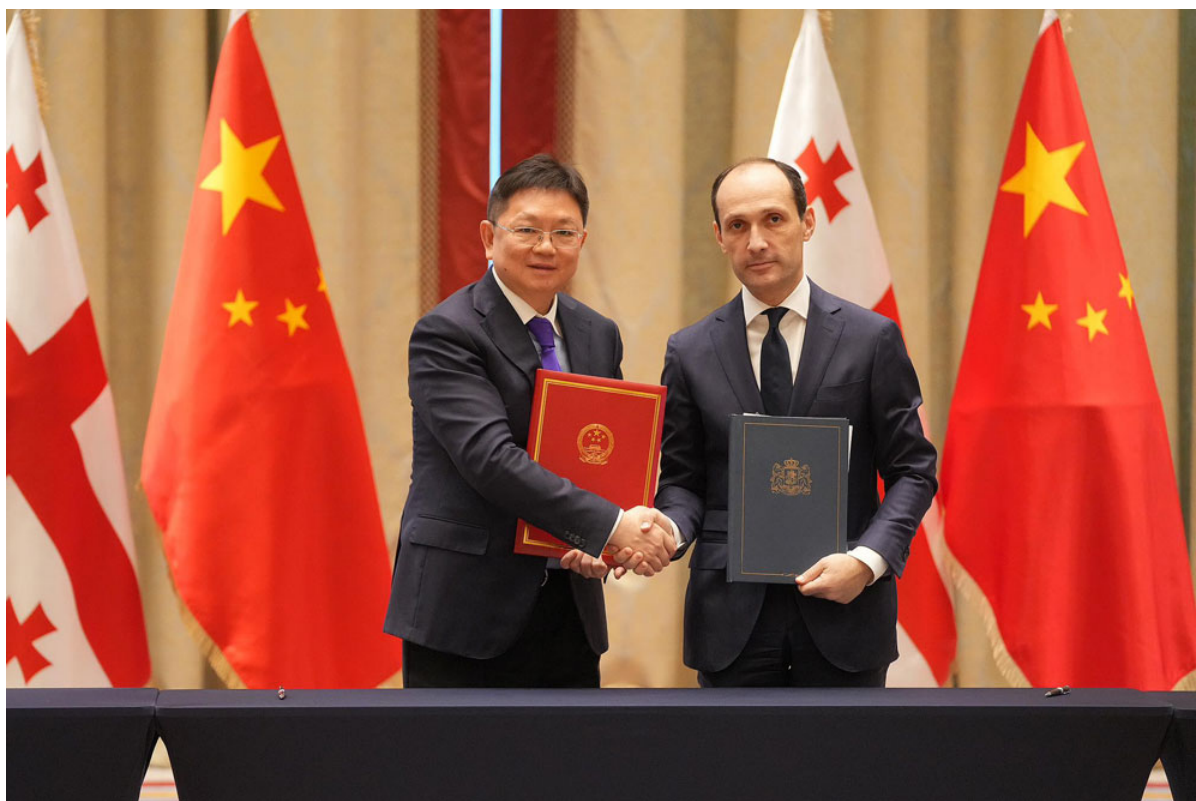
Addressing broader political concerns, Botchorishvili criticized what she described as "foreign interference" and the misuse of international institutions. She reiterated the government's trust in the OSCE, citing its role in election monitoring, and pledged cooperation to address its recommendations.

Secretary General Sinirlioğlu,

in his remarks, reaffirmed the OSCE's strong commitment to Georgia and regional security.

"Stability here in Georgia is vital both for its people and for the wider region's security," he said, expressing support for the IPRM mechanisms and the OSCE's involvement in conflict resolution.

"I want to reaffirm our willingness to support Georgia in addressing internal and external challenges," he added, encouraging Georgian authorities to continue engaging with the OSCE's expertise and support.



Tbilisi Hosts 9th Session of Sino-Georgian Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

The 9th session of the Joint Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation between Georgia and China was held in Tbilisi, co-chaired by Georgia's First Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Economy, Levan Davitashvili, and China's Deputy Minister of Commerce, Ling Ji. The session focused on strengthening bilateral trade,

enhancing transit cooperation, and opening new export channels, including a newly signed agreement on Georgian honey exports to China.

According to an official press release, the talks addressed a range of economic issues, including increasing trade volume, expanding direct flights, and deepening cooperation along the

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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 2.7500; Euro - 3.1614; GBP - 3.6770; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.3805; Swiss Franc - 3.3875

Tbilisi Hosts 9th Session of Sino-Georgian Trade and Economic Cooperation Commission

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Middle Corridor—a strategic transit route connecting Europe and Asia through Georgia. Davitashvili emphasized the

significance of the Free Trade Agreement between the two countries, stating: “Georgia became the first country in the region to establish a free trade regime with China, thereby underscoring Georgia’s strategic importance as a trade partner and transit hub.”
He noted that trade turnover between Georgia and China reached \$1.92 billion in 2024 - an increase of 17% from the previous year, making China Georgia’s fourth-largest trading partner. Davitashvili also highlighted Georgia’s post-pandemic

economic recovery, pointing to a 9.7% average growth rate in 2024, one of the highest in the region and across Europe.
The Georgian delegation included several high-level officials from the ruling Georgian Dream party, among them Deputy Economy Minister Genadi Arveladze, Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandre Khvtisiashvili, First Deputy Health Minister Irakli Sasania, Deputy Agriculture Minister Lasha Dolidze, Georgia’s Ambassador to China Paata Kalandadze, and President of the Georgian Chamber

of Commerce Giorgi Pertaiia.
Following the session, Davitashvili and Ling signed a protocol summarizing the outcomes of the talks. In addition to the agreement on honey exports, the sides are currently negotiating expanded export opportunities for Georgian poultry, with a deal expected in the coming months.
Davitashvili also extended an invitation to the head of the Chinese delegation to attend the 5th Tbilisi Silk Road Forum, scheduled for October 22–23, 2025.

The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF
De Facto Foreign Minister of Abkhazia Urges Repeal of Georgia’s Occupation Law



Oleg Bartsits, the newly appointed de facto foreign minister of Abkhazia, has stated that Georgia must demonstrate concrete actions if it seeks to improve relations with Abkhazia, the Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia), and Russia. Among the steps he proposed are repealing the Georgian Law on Occupied Territories and signing an agreement on the non-use of military force.

In an interview with Russian state-controlled outlet TASS, Bartsits said: “The Georgian authorities’ statements that they want to improve relations with their main neighbors – Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the Russian Federation – do not go unnoticed by us, but at the same time, practical confirmations and real steps are needed. In my opinion, such a step could be sev-

eral, including the repeal of the law on occupied territories. Also, and this is very important – signing an agreement on the non-use of military force.”
He added that these issues would be raised at upcoming sessions of the Geneva International

Discussions.
Georgia’s Law on Occupied Territories, enacted in 2008 following the Russia-Georgia war and Moscow’s recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent entities, criminalizes entry into the regions from the Russian-controlled side and imposes penalties for violations.

As for the proposed non-use of force agreement, Tbilisi maintains that it already committed to that principle in the August 12, 2008 EU-brokered ceasefire agreement and has upheld it ever since.

Media Coalition Marks 100 Days Since Detention of Journalist Mzia Amaglobeli

The Media Advocacy Coalition has released a statement marking the 100th day of “unlawful” imprisonment of Mzia Amaglobeli, founder of Batumelebi and Netgazeti.
According to the coalition, Amaglobeli is being targeted by state-driven propaganda efforts. “Today marks one hundred days since Mzia Amaglobeli has been in captivity of the regime,” the statement reads.

The coalition claims that in the case against Amaglobeli, police officers portrayed as victims are being supported by fabricated video evidence and testimony from false witnesses.
“State propaganda is being directed against Mzia Amaglobeli, which, by spreading



მზია ამაგლობელის უკანონო პატიმრობის 100 დღე

false information, is trying to make society lose faith in the importance of fighting for the common good and justice,” the statement continues.
Reaffirming support for Amaglobeli, the coalition empha-

sized the role of journalism in defending truth: “Society will stand on the side of truth, just like Mzia Amaglobeli, who, as a journalist, chose the search for truth and its proclamation as a profession and a way of life.”

EU Commissioner for Enlargement Marta Kos “deeply regrets” the Georgian parliament’s adoption in the first reading of amendments to the

EU ‘deeply regrets’ amendments to law on grants in Georgia



law on grants. In a post on X yesterday, she described it as “yet another step by the Georgian authorities away from EU values and standards”.
Initiated by the Georgian Dream party, the amendments require prior government approval for foreign funding of civil society organisations and suggest punishing recipients for unapproved funding with fines. The first reading took place on

14 April.
“The law adopted today will further shrink civic space and add to existing repression,” said Marta Kos. “Such steps are contrary to democratic principles and should be reversed.”
Due to the political situation in Georgia, the country’s EU accession process has been de facto halted since last October.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Weather

Wednesday, April 23
Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 24°C
Night T-storm
Low: 13°C
Thursday, April 24
Day Mostly Cloudy
High: 23°C
Night Mostly Cloudy
Low: 14°C

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