

## Salome Zourabichvili's Resistance Platform Meets EU Diplomats, Discusses Coalition Plans

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

Members of the Resistance Platform, founded by Georgia's fifth president, Salome Zourabichvili, met with the European Union Ambassador to Georgia and representatives of the diplomatic corps for what was described as an introductory meeting to present the platform's goals and structure.

Following the meeting, Zourabichvili said the platform is actively preparing for the possibility of early parliamentary elections and the formation of a coalition government. She emphasized that ongoing instability within the ruling Georgian Dream party provides reason to believe that elections may be called in the near future.

"This was the first meeting in this format," said Zourabichvili. "We introduced our structure, working procedures, and participants, and explained that the Resistance Platform is engaging with various sectors of society, including business, culture, NGOs, and civic protest groups, to build uni-



fied political positions." Zourabichvili underlined that the platform is not only preparing for the election itself, but also for what comes afterward. "Our ambition is to form a

coalition government. Georgia has little experience with this, but the countries represented today have a lot of insight into how challenging such governments can be to

form. Our early preparation shows how seriously we take the future," she stated.

She added that the meeting also touched on the EU's position toward Geor-

gia. While acknowledging that opinions within the EU vary, Zourabichvili noted that European diplomats are closely observing the political situation in the country.

"There are many signs that the ruling party is facing internal fluctuations," Zourabichvili said. "That gives us hope that we are on the path toward new parliamentary elections."

## Court Orders Giorgi Bachiasvili to Return 9,000 Bitcoins to Bidzina Ivanishvili

BY LIZA MCHEDLIDZE

A Georgian court has ruled in favor of

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of the Georgian Dream party, ordering Giorgi Bachiasvili, the

former CEO of the Co-Investment Fund, to return 9,000 bitcoins. The ruling follows Bachiasvili's

criminal conviction for misappropriating a significant amount of cryptocurrency belonging to Ivanishvili.

According to Ivanishvili's lawyer, Teimuraz Tsikvadze, the court fully upheld their claim through a simplified procedure. "The court fully granted Bidzina Ivanishvili's lawsuit," Tsikvadze stated. "It established that Bachiasvili misappropriated up to 9,000 bitcoins, and if these bitcoins cannot be returned in kind, then his personal property will be seized based on the market value of bitcoin at the time of enforcement." The ruling includes immediate enforcement of the decision and sets a seven-day window for appeal.

Tsikvadze emphasized that the civil court based its decision on the outcome of the earlier criminal case, where Bachiasvili was found guilty and sentenced to 11 years in prison. The charges in-

cluded large-scale misappropriation and money laundering.

However, Bachiasvili's legal team disputes the legitimacy of the court's handling of the civil case. His lawyer, Sopo Kurtauli, argued that the case should not have been reviewed under a simplified procedure, especially given that the criminal verdict has not yet exhausted the appeal process. "The court had no right to consider the case in a simplified manner; the case should have been considered as a common lawsuit," Kurtauli stated. She confirmed that Bachiasvili plans to challenge the decision in the appeals court.

The dispute centers on an unprecedented amount of cryptocurrency. At current market rates, 9,000 bitcoins represent a value of several hundred million U.S. dollars, making this one of the most high-profile cryptocurrency-related legal cases in Georgia to date.



The News in Brief

PREPARED BY MESSENGER STAFF

Georgia Condemns Resumption of Flights Between Russia and Occupied Abkhazia



საქართველოს სამოქალაქო ავიაციის სააგენტო  
Georgian Civil Aviation Agency

The Civil Aviation Agency of Georgia has strongly condemned the resumption of direct flights between Russia and the occupied Abkhazian region, calling it a violation of both international law and Georgian legislation. The agency emphasized that the airport in question was opened illegally and lacks the necessary certification to ensure flight safety.

In a statement, the agency stressed that Georgia is unable to supervise aviation safety and security in the occupied territory, making any air traffic from the region a serious risk. "Operating air traffic from an airport that does not have an aerodrome suitability certificate issued by an authorized body... poses a threat to aviation and passenger safety," the statement reads.

The Georgian government reiterated that any flights operating from Abkhazia without the permission of Georgian authorities violate the country's Law on Occupied Territories, as well as interna-

tional civil aviation standards under the Chicago Convention. Georgia, as a signatory to the Convention, said it remains committed to international norms and continues to raise the issue through diplomatic and multilateral channels.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has already submitted a diplomatic note to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), reaffirming the country's position on the inadmissibility of international flights from occupied Abkhazia. The government says it will continue coordinating with relevant agencies and international partners to address the violation.

Regular flights between Russia and Abkhazia resumed on May 1st for the first time in 30 years.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Denies Abolishment of EU Integration Office

The Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has refuted recent reports claiming the abolition of the Directorate General for European Integration. In an official statement, the Ministry clarified that the ongoing structural reform involves the creation of a new Political Directorate for

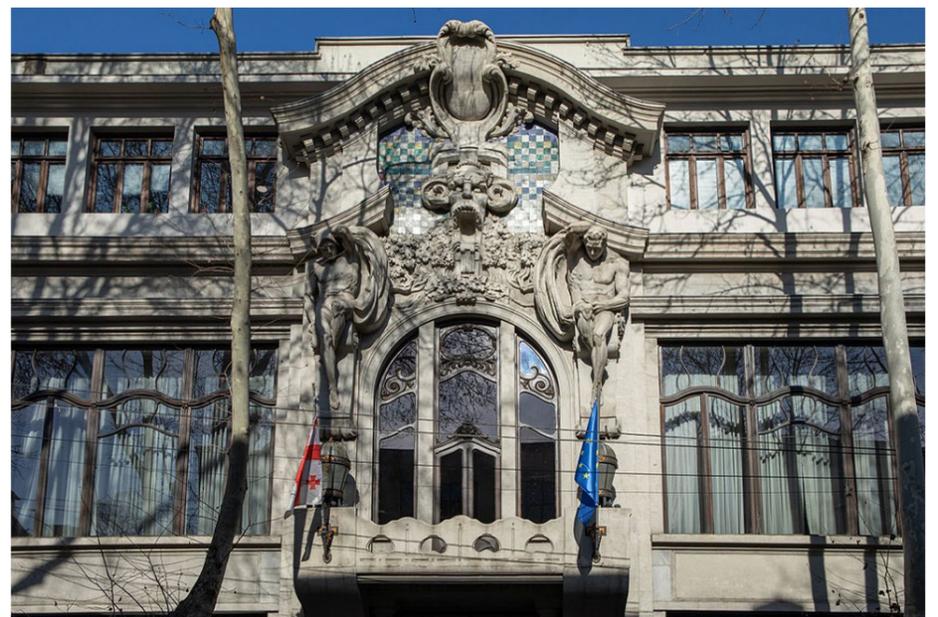
European Affairs, which will consolidate the existing Europe and European Integration Departments.

"The information that the Directorate General for European Integration will be abolished in the Ministry is not true," the statement reads. "As a result of the reform, a Political Directorate for European Affairs will be established... [with] four divisions in the European Integration Department, which will serve the country's EU integration agenda."

The Ministry emphasized that the reorganization aims to strengthen and

streamline Georgia's coordination with European institutions and member states, describing the move as a step toward enhancing efficiency rather than dismantling the EU integration framework.

This clarification comes in response to claims made by Grigol Gegelia, a representative of the opposition coalition Lelo-Strong Georgia. Gegelia alleged that the Foreign Minister, Iliia Darchiashvili, is effectively shutting down the directorate and laying off 250 employees as part of the reform process.



Young European Ambassadors in Azerbaijan meet with EU High Representative Kaja Kallas



On 25 April, a group of Young European Ambassadors (YEAs) from Azerbaijan met EU High Representative Kaja Kallas during

her official visit to Baku. The meeting, also attended by Peter Michalko, the EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan, provided an opportunity for the young ambassadors to discuss the future of Azerbaijan-EU relations and the important role of youth in fostering understanding and cooperation between Azerbaijan and the European Union.

The YEAs, a diverse group of young leaders, shared their views on how youth could contribute to shaping Europe's future, and discussed ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing the EU-Azerbaijan partnership. Key topics included sustainable development, digital and green innovation, and the role of young people.

Kaja Kallas highlighted the significant role of young people in building an inclusive society and expressed her support for increasing youth participation in European initiatives.

The Young European Ambassadors (YEAs) initiative brings together socially engaged youth from the six Eastern Partner countries, the European Union and the United Kingdom to foster dialogue and to raise awareness about the EU and its cooperation with its Eastern partner countries.

(euneighbourseast.eu)

Undermining Moldova's sovereignty: EU restrictive measures renewed until 29 April 2026

On 28 April, the Council of the European Union decided to prolong EU restrictive measures against those responsible for actions aimed at destabilising, undermining or threatening the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Moldova, until 29 April 2026.



These restrictive measures currently apply to a total of 16 individuals and two entities.

Those listed under the EU sanctions regime are subject to an asset freeze. It is also prohibited to make available funds or economic resources to them, either directly or indirectly. Additionally, a travel ban applies to the natural persons listed, preventing them from entering and transiting through the territories of EU Member States.

"Efforts to destabilise Moldova have noticeably increased since the beginning of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and represent a direct threat to the stability and security of the external borders of the EU," says a press release by the Council of the EU.

The EU restrictive measures were first introduced in April 2023 at the request of the Republic of Moldova, to target persons responsible for supporting or implementing actions which undermine or threaten its sovereignty and independence, and the country's democracy, the rule of law, stability or security.

Weather

Friday, May 2

Day Mostly Cloudy

High: 21°C

Night Mostly Cloudy

Low: 13°C

Saturday, May 3

Day Partly Cloudy

High: 21°C

Night Partly Cloudy

Low: 12°C

published by

The Messenger

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