

Giorgi Vashadze Calls on Authorities to Establish Expanded Format of National Security Council



Leader of the opposition Strategy Aghmashenebeli party, Giorgi Vashadze.

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Leader of the Strategy Aghmashenebeli party Giorgi Vashadze calls on authorities to establish an expanded format of the National Security Council with the involvement of opposition.

As Vashadze noted at a press conference held in the Parliament yesterday, against the background of Russian aggression and the changed geopolitical situation in Ukraine, the country is facing great challenges, stressing that "no single political force, including Georgian Dream, can guarantee peace in Georgia." According to him, the guarantee of peace can only be national unity.

Vashadze noted that the political and economic security of the country and the process of integration into the European Union are the priorities and challenges to which the Government and the state must respond immediately.

In this regard, he called on the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Parliament and the Chairman of the ruling party to create an expanded format of the National Security Council, which will work in three directions - ensuring peace and national security, ensuring the accelerated EU integration process, and developing and implementing an economic and energy security strategy.

According to him, on March 3, the day when the Prime Minister signed Georgia's application for accelerated accession to the European Union, he addressed the Government with concrete proposals to set a common agenda for EU member-

ship, however, as he noted this proposal was not responded to.

Vashadze also urges the authorities to

immediately start joint consultations with the Western partners. As he noted, he is visiting Brussels in the coming days. He

reminded the authorities of the initiative for a joint visit to Brussels, noting that this initiative still remains in force.



National Security Council, with the joint involvement of the authorities and the opposition, will focus on ensuring peace and national security, accelerated EU integration process, and economic and energy security strategy.

Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.2219; Euro - 3.5599; GBP - 4.2326; 100 Russian Ruble - 3.0678; Swiss Franc - 3.4640

Turkey, Russia, Azerbaijan Georgia's Top Trading Partners in January-February 2022

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

The National Statistics Office (Geostat) released the preliminary data on Georgia's foreign trade in January-February 2022. According to the information, in that period, Georgian external trade turnover equalled \$2.5 billion, which is an increase of 49.3% year-on-year.

The value of exports grew by 54.5% and equalled \$760.4 million in the reporting period, while imports also increased by 47.2%, reaching \$1.7 billion. Trade deficit, a measure of the negative balance of trade in which imports exceed exports, amounted to \$1 billion, and the share in trade turnover added up to 40.2%.

According to Geostat, in January-February of this year, the share of the 10 largest trading partners in the total foreign trade turnover of Georgia amounted to 67.3%. The largest trade partners of the country in total external trade turnover are Turkey - \$354.4 million, Russia



Georgian domestic exports were up 54.5% in January-February 2022.

- \$274.6 million and Azerbaijan - \$248.8 mln.

Georgia's top partners by exports in January-February 2022 were China which ranks first in the top three largest exports with \$95.4 million, Russia is in second place - \$92.9 million, and Azerbaijan - \$92.3 mln, while the top markets by imports were Turkey (\$295.5 million), Russia (\$181.8 million) and Azerbaijan (\$156.5 million).

The top three export items

were as follows: Copper ores and concentrates - \$156.2 million (+65.4%), Ferro-alloys - \$100.4 million (+92.7%), Motor cars - \$72.5 million (+45.3%)

The top import commodities were the following: Petroleum and petroleum oils - \$162.6 million (+94.6%), Copper ores and concentrates - \$153.8 million (+159.1%), Motor cars - \$133.9 million (-8.9%).

Georgia has exported locally produced goods worth \$760.4 million in January-February 2022, which is 54.5% higher year-on-year. Local exports in the country accounted for 73.1% of total exports in the reporting period, amounting to \$555.8 million, 51.7% higher compared to January-February 2021.

Georgia's top trading partners were: China - \$90 million, Bulgaria - \$83.7 million, Russia - \$80.2 million, Turkey - \$55.9 million, The United States - \$39.2 million.

The five largest domestic export goods of Georgia are as follows: Copper ores and concentrates - \$156.3 million (+65.4%), Ferro-alloys - \$100.5 million (+92.7%), Nitrogenous fertilizers - \$58.2 million (+214.3%), Wine of fresh grapes - \$33.2 million (+43.9%), Natural or artificial mineral and aerated waters - \$23.3 million (+26.6%)

The largest increase in January-February 2022 was recorded in the export of nitrogenous fertilizers - with a 214.3% increase - and in the export of precious metal ores and concentrates - which totalled \$10.5 million, amounting to a 101.2% increase year-on-year.

Reduction was registered in the export of hazelnuts and other nuts, which totalled \$13 million in January-February 2022, marking a 17.3% decrease year-on-year.

EU Discusses New Sanctions Against Russia, May Impose Embargo on Oil

BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

According to the Foreign Ministers of Lithuania and Ireland, the EU should strengthen sanctions against Russia and apply them to the energy sector.

The EU has already imposed tough sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, including the sale of central bank assets. Personal sanctions affect Russian government officials and oligarchs.

However, the Russian war in Ukraine has been going on for 26 days. The city of Mariupol is under siege, Russia does not allow citizens to evacuate, and the city is not supplied with water, food, and electricity.

"When I look at the scale of

the devastation in Ukraine, it is difficult to say why we should put pressure on the energy sector, especially oil and coal," said the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland, Simon Cowen at the meeting of the Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs of the European Union.

Diplomats told Reuters that the Baltic states, including Lithuania, were considering an oil and coal embargo as a further logical step. However, Germany says action against Russia is moving too fast, while prices for energy products in Europe are already high.

"Talking about the energy sector is inevitable. We should really talk about oil because that's the most money in the Russian budget. We should not get tired of imposing sanctions on Russia, and helping Ukraine," said the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, Gabrielius Landsbergis.

Weather

Tuesday, March 22

Day Partly Cloudy High: 6°C
Night Partly Cloudy Low: 1°C

Wednesday, March 23

Day Snow Showers High: 3°C
Night Light Snow Low: 0°C

published by The Messenger

43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia
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Invites 16-20 year old young speakers to take part in the
Public Speaking Competition
The theme of the competition is "We expect too much from our heroes". Speakers may interpret this theme in any way they see fit, but they should not use the theme as their title. Each speaker will be allocated 5 minutes.
The competition will be held in three rounds. The first round, March 21, at the English Language Centre "British Corner".
The date and theme of the second round will be announced later.
The competition is sponsored by the Bank of Georgia.
Due to the pandemic the final of the competition in London will be held online.
The deadline for registration is March 15.
Contact us:
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