

## Government - President Dispute: Parliament Adopts Amendment to Organic Law on Constitutional Law at Final Hearing



BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

By 83 votes to 6, the Parliament supported in the third reading the amendment to the Organic Law on the Constitutional Court, which addresses the issue of disputes between the powers of the constitutional bodies. Thus Parliament has paved the way for the Government to launch a competence dispute with the President, after lawmakers pushed through amendments to the Law on Constitutional Court in the final hearing.

According to the amendment, any state body - the President of Georgia, the Parliament of Georgia, the Government of Georgia, the High Council of Justice, the Prosecutor General, the Board of the National Bank, the Auditor General, the Public Defender, the High Representation of the Autonomous Republic or the executive body - have the right to file a constitutional complaint in the Constitutional Court if their constitutional authority was fully or

partially violated by their legal act, action or inaction. The previous iteration of the law allowed launching a dispute primarily over the compliance of normative acts issued by the defendant.

According to the draft, the satisfaction of a constitutional claim by a Constitutional Court results in declaration of a legal act or part of it or an action or omission that has fully or partially violated the constitutional authority of the plaintiff as unconstitutional. When determining the constitutionality of a normative act, the Constitutional Court verifies its content in accordance with the Constitution of Georgia. The law will enter into force upon publication.

The ruling party Georgian Dream unveiled the legislation in late March, soon after announcing the Government sought to sue President Salome Zurbishvili for pursuing foreign policy by side-stepping the executive branch. Party claimed the President had violated the Constitution on several occasions, including by unauthori-

zed visits to Paris and Brussels, as well as refusals to sign off on several candidates for foreign service posts. GD argued that the President's role in signing off on diplomatic nominees is merely ceremonial as per the constitution.

"The Government of Georgia is obliged to apply to the Constitutional Court in the near future within the framework of the dispute over the competencies of the Court and to request confirmation of the violation of the Constitution by the President of Georgia," the GD's statement from March, read.

The statement also said that in violation of the constitutional reservation, without the consent of the Georgian government, the President of Georgia, as she herself admitted at parliament, made several visits to different countries. An extensive statement issued by the Georgian Dream party also mentioned several cases that the ruling party considers unconstitutional by the president, including the issue of ambassadors.

"The appointment of ambassadors and other diplomatic representatives is one of the most important tools for the implementation of foreign policy. The relevant act is issued with the co-signature of the President and the Prime Minister, and according to the Constitution, political responsibility for such an act rests solely with the government... the president formally appoints ambassadors, and the government is politically and practically responsible for their selection.

Over the past year, there have been a number of cases in which the president has refused to appoint an ambassador or a diplomatic representative nominated by the government, which is grossly contrary to the Constitution of Georgia," the statement said.

Thus the introduction of the key amendments for launching the dispute was seen as an 'attempt at political revenge against the President' by the NGO Georgian Young Lawyers Association.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

PREPARED BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

#### Zurbishvili: By Offering Megrelian and Svan Languages at Schools as Electives, We Will Preserve These Languages

"As a result of the Russian occupation regime, both Abkhazian and Georgian languages are equally restricted in Abkhazia. The number of speakers of the Abkhazian language is decreasing from year to year.

Georgians living in Gali and nearby villages are prohibited from receiving school education in Georgian. In addition to the protection of the Georgian and Abkhazian languages, as defined by the Constitution, we are responsible for the protection and survival of the Megrelian, Svan, Chan and Laz languages.

#### Danilov: There were 5 attempts to Liquidate Zelensky, This is # 1 Plan for Russia

According to the head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine Alexei Danilov, Russia was still planning an attack on Ukraine on February 22 and its main goal was the liquidation of President Volodymyr Zelensky.

As Danilov said in an interview with the BBC Russian bureau, "the plan was quite simple and brazen."

"First of all, the liquidation of the president was important. It was the number one issue for the Russians, and there were several attempts in this direction. Moreover, I can say that on February 22, at around 19:20, we received information that this might happen in the near future. 4 more attempts.

"The last one was on March 7 - then we received information from our partners, from intelligence, that such an operation was planned ... I want to thank the president and the state security guard who protects the government quarter, as well as all the military," Danilov said.



EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.0741 | EURO - 3.3526 | GBP - 4.0369 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 3.7324 | SWISS FRANC - 3.2885 |

# Czech Republic Wants Georgia in EU, Czech FM Says

By KHATIA BZHALAVA

Within the framework of his visit to the Czech Republic, Georgian Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili met with his Czech counterpart, Jan Lipavsky. The sides focused on Georgia's European integration process and as the Czech FM noted, one of the main priorities of the Czech EU Presidency would be to support the Associated Trio (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova) and their integration aspirations. The sides also discussed the prospects that have opened up for Georgia by receiving an EU membership questionnaire.

Emphasizing that the Czech Republic backs Georgia on its path to the EU, Minister Lipavsky said in a joint press point with his Georgian colleague that "Georgia is part of Europe and the Czech Republic wants the country in the European Union."

The Minister also stressed that the Czech Republic "fully respects and supports Georgia's territorial integrity, and condemns Russian activities in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Against the background of the difficult situation in the occupied territories, the Ministers highlighted the need for international partners' greater involvement in ensuring peace and stability in the region. In this regard, the Georgian side noted the Czech Republic's participation in the EU Monitoring Mission.

While discussing bilateral relations, the sides emphasized the great potential for coopera-



► Georgian Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili with his Czech counterpart, Jan Lipavsky.

tion in the fields of economics, trade, and tourism and expressed their readiness to actively cooperate in this direction. According to Czech Foreign Minister, there is great potential for further investments as well as trade exchange, noting that last year the Czech Republic invested over \$82 million in Georgia. Lipavsky also offered Georgian FM cooperation in various areas, such as the energy sector,

agriculture, environmental protection, and ecology. As he stressed, Georgia remains to be one of the six priority countries in terms of the Czech Republic's development assistance.

According to the Georgian Foreign Ministry, discussions also focused on the Czech Republic's support for Georgia's integration with NATO and the practical assistance in this process.



► Czech Foreign Minister pledged that the Czech Republic backs Georgia on its path to the EU.

## EU-UNICEF juvenile justice programme in Georgia: over 5,600 children and young people diverted from prosecution

Over a decade, as many as 5,600 children and young people aged between 14 and 21 have been diverted from prosecution, as a result of eleven years of work by the Diversion and Mediation Programme, reported at a conference organised by the Ministry of Justice and UNICEF, with the support of the European Union.

The conference was held in the framework of the project 'Strengthening Child Protection



Systems and Services in Georgia', aimed in particular at developing the capacity of professionals at central and municipal levels to support and protect children and families in Georgia.

Diversion is an alternative mechanism to criminal proceedings and a major cornerstone of the juvenile justice system. According to the Juvenile Justice Code, diversion is the priority measure, which means that, if a juvenile commits an offense,

the use of diversion should be considered as a first priority.

According to experts, the Diversion and Mediation Programme, introduced in 2010, has made major progress in Georgia, making a significant shift from a zero-tolerance policy to restorative justice and rehabilitation. Since 2014, the programme has included those juveniles who have committed not only minor offences but also serious crimes.

**FRIDAY APRIL 15**  
 Day Partly cloudy High: 17°C  
 Night Partly cloudy Low: 5°C

**FRIDAY APRIL 16**  
 Day Partly cloudy High: 18°C  
 Night Clear Low: 6°C

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On the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of German-Georgian diplomatic relations, the German Embassy in Tbilisi and the Levan Mikeladze Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia celebrated this important day on April 13.

The panel discussion, which focused on “30 years since the visit of Hans-Dietrich Genscher: Germany, Georgia and Europe as a whole,” discussed the history and present of German-Georgian relations. The discussion was attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia in 1995-2003, Irakli Menagarishvili, Member of the Supervisory Board and Co-Chair of the Strategic Research Center of the Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies and Thomas Matusek, former German ambassador and Head of the Bureau of former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.



German Ambassador to Georgia  
H.E. Hubert Knirsch



H.E. Thomas Matusek



H.E. Irakli Menagarishvili

















