

Georgian PM Hands Over Second Part of EU Membership Questionnaire to Ambassador Carl Hartzell

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili handed over the second part of Georgia's European Union membership questionnaire ahead of the set deadline to the EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell. The Prime Minister pointed out that "Georgia's European choice is a decision with no alternative" and emphasized that it is the choice of the Georgian people and not just of the Government. As the governmental press center informs, the ambassador thanked the Prime Minister and stressed that the questionnaire would be very helpful to the European Commission in delivering its opinion.

"It is my pleasure to deliver to you our questionnaire answers. We have completed filling it, a total of 7 volumes. We are happy to hand it over to you, and we are looking forward to the European Commission's and member states' decisions," the Prime Minister said.

The second, sectoral part of the European Commission's questionnaire incorporates 33 chapters and up to 2,300 questions. The topics covered by the questionnaire range from existing legislation on work permits and the freedom of movement of workers to anti-discriminatory laws. The document touches upon the existing banking and non-cash payment systems in the country, and whether there are effective laws in force to pre-



EU Ambassador to Georgia Carl Hartzell and Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili.

vent money laundering and the funding of illegal activities. The questions also

focus on Georgia's intellectual property laws and the extent of copyright laws re-

garding computer applications and technology as well.

According to the official statement, to complete the larger part of the questionnaire effectively and fit within tight deadlines, all relevant institutions were engaged and the process was personally supervised by the Head of Government. After accepting the completed questionnaire, the European Commission will prepare its assessment and refer it to the Council of the European Union afterward, with the relevant decision expected by the end of June.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia Ilia Darchiashvili has expressed his hope that the European partners would 'properly' assess the country's progress on the path to European Union integration. According to him, the questionnaire "fully reflected" the reforms implemented and planned by Georgia on its path to European integration.

"We hope that the efforts made by the Government of Georgia, all Government agencies and sub-agencies to complete and prepare this questionnaire will be a good basis for Georgia to receive specific, tangible results on the path of our country's European integration," the Minister said.

Shalva Papuashvili, the Speaker of the Georgian Parliament, has expressed hope that the European Union would make a "historic and correct" decision and would grant the Associated Trio countries (Georgia, Ukraine, and Moldova) the status of membership candidates.



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Exchange Rates: US Dollar - 3.0321; Euro - 3.1977; GBP - 3.7459; 100 Russian Ruble - 4.3768; Swiss Franc - 3.0424

Ministry of Justice Offers Saakashvili Transfer to Clinic

By NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Minister of Justice, Rati Bregadze has announced that the third President of Georgia in custody, Mikheil Saakashvili, will be offered to be transferred to the Vivamedi Clinic in order to prevent a possible deterioration of his health. The decision was made public at the press conference held after the government session.

According to Bregadze, convict Saakashvili has been prescribed medical treatment, but he selectively receives only a part of the medication, thus actually refusing, according to his own decision, full treatment. He has also decided to selectively eat food and, 'naturally, is endangering his own health'.

"We, as a responsible state, act in the best interests of the health and life of any human being. Therefore, as in the case of any other prisoner, Mikheil Saakashvili, in order to avoid possible complications, will be offered to be taken to the clinic 'Vivamed', where he will be examined and, if necessary, will receive appropriate treatment."

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili has welcomed the proposal by the country's Justice Ministry. Her administration said that all measures have to be taken to ensure the health of the former President, stressing the importance of eliminating questions regarding the issue both in the society and from European partners.

Responding to the offer, Saakashvili has set a number of conditions before agreeing to the transfer - ensuring permanent access to him for family members, his personal physician



Nikoloz Kipshidze, and members of a commission set up by the Empathy NGO to monitor his condition, along with lawyers and MPs.

Additionally, Saakashvili asked for the involvement of the Empathy Centre in his medical examination and treatment, with the participation of members of the Public Defender's Medical Council set up for the same purpose.

The members of the council visited the third president in prison on April 22, after a break

of almost 4 months. Council's report, published on April 27, states former President had developed anorexia and was suffering from a lack of proteins as a result of a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, recommending a 'timely, complex neuro-psychological and physical rehabilitation' for him.

At May 10 plenary session of the parliament, Khatia Dekanoidze, chairman of the United National Movement - United Opposition "Power is in Unity" faction, addressed the

majority MPs and the government to send international medical experts to the prison to study Saakashvili's health condition.

Previous day members of the United National Movement faction said they were ready to take Saakashvili hostage if his request for medical treatment abroad was granted. According to them, Saakashvili would return to Georgia after rehabilitation.

Former President of Georgia, a citizen of Ukraine Saakashvili, who was sentenced to 6 years in

prison in two cases, returned to Georgia at the end of September 2021. He was arrested on October 1, the day before the local elections.

On the day of his arrest, he went on a hunger strike. Due to the aggravation of the situation, on the 50th day of the hunger strike, Mikheil Saakashvili agreed to stop the protest if he was taken to Gori Military Hospital for treatment. His lawyers say the treatment has failed and it is necessary to take Saakashvili abroad.

The News in Brief

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THE MESSENGER STAFF

Mikheil Saakashvili agrees to move to Clinic Vivamed for examinations

According to Koba Nakopia, a member of the United National

Movement, Mikheil Saakashvili agrees to go to Vivamedi Clinic for examination. The third president has already confirmed the readiness of the relevant staff.

According to Nakopia, Saakashvili refused to be hospitalized yesterday because, naming the rare opportunity to meet with his family members as the reason.

"He was already informed before I entered that he would be transferred, just here is one very important detail that there is no talk of transferring him for treatment, only talking about the examination.

That is, he was offered to be taken to Vivamed for examina-

tion and then sent back to the penitentiary, where he was told that this should happen today, to which he said he could not go today, as today is the rarest day during his stay here when he is given the opportunity to meet. "Family members had to turn down the offer because of this," Nakopia said.

UN Chooses Czech Republic to Replace Russia in UN Human Rights Council

The United Nations has chosen the Czech Republic to replace Russia in the UN Human Rights Council.

The UN General Assembly elected the Czech Republic to replace Russia by a majority vote in the Human Rights Council.

The decision was supported by 157 out of 193 members of the General Assembly during the secret ballot held today, 23 abstained.

On May 7, the UN General Assembly suspended Russia from membership in the UN Human Rights Council.

In the draft resolution, the UN General As-

sembly stated that it would "suspend the membership of a member of the Human Rights Council who commits a gross and systematic violation of human rights."



Weather

Wednesday, May 11

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 20°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

Thursday, May 12

Day Partly Cloudy
High: 20°C

Night Partly Cloudy
Low: 9°C

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