

Czech Republic Takes Over EU Council Presidency



► Mrs. Jana Gasparikova, (Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Czech Republic), Ambassador of France, H.E. Diégo Colas and Ambassador of the Czech Republic H.E. Petr Mikyska

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Czech Republic starts its Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 July 2022, for the second time during EU membership. In December 2021, the General Affairs Council endorsed the so-called trio program, of 3 consecutive presidencies: France, Czechia, and Sweden. The trio program was developed at a time when the major challenge for the EU was the post-pandemic recovery. It has therefore been focused on protecting citizens and freedoms, developing the European economic model, building a climate-neutral, green, fair, and social Europe, and promoting its interests and values in the world.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has brought the necessity of a fundamental reassessment of the EU priorities and significantly influenced the preparation of the Czech Presidency's priorities. It will address the urgent security issues while carrying on with the originally identified files such as the green and digital transition of the EU economy.

The motto of the Czech Presidency is 'Europe as a task – rethink, rebuild, re-power'. Legacy of Vaclav Havel's reflection about Europe's role in a global world at a historical moment of a reshuffled world order and a reminder that Europe is a matter of constant work for every citizen. This slogan also calls for responsibility and proactive decisions based on values and conscience.

The political priorities are divided into 5 cross-sectoral flagship areas. They aim at responding to current challenges, as well as at pursuing the EU's long-term objectives:

Managing refugee crisis and post-war recovery of Ukraine: supporting Ukraine's sovereignty by all available means, promoting EU solidarity, efficiency, and flexibility in managing the migration-related issues, reaching a consensus on



the granting of EU candidate status to Ukraine, and contributing to its economic recovery and stability.

Energy security: reducing energy dependency on authoritarian regimes such as Russia, diversifying resources throughout the REPowerEU, mitigating the negative social and economic impacts of high energy prices.

Reinforcement of European defence capacities, incl. Cybersecurity: promoting security and defence cooperation with NATO, implementing the Strategic

Compass, enhancing a better intra-EU cooperation and strengthening the EU's industrial capacities in strategic areas.

Strategic resilience of EU's economy: reducing dependence on hostile regimes, strengthening self-sufficiency and deepening of the internal market of democratic states, accelerating digitization and adapting free market rules to these developments.

The resilience of democratic institutions: safeguarding values of democracy and rule of law, media freedom, transparency,

open dialogue with citizens both in online and offline spaces.

Sectoral priorities in the area of external relations: Promoting a united and effective EU in external relations, building consensus among the member states in coordination with the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service, and the Commission.

Deepening the transatlantic partnership and strengthening relations with other like-minded countries, Ukraine and Eastern Europe, Western Balkans, Indo-Pacific, and the Sahel.

Building consensus on granting the candidate status to Ukraine, supporting the European aspirations of the associated countries of the Eastern Neighborhood, achieving concrete progress in the EU enlargement negotiations, and supporting the accession process of Western Balkan candidates.

Continuous humanitarian assistance to Ukraine and facilitation of the comprehensive reconstruction initiative (Rebuild Ukraine); promoting the nexus of humanitarian, development, and security activities, resilience building, disaster risk reduction, and food security.

A calendar of multiple meetings and events to be held in Brussels, Luxembourg, and Czechia has been released. Around two thousand working groups and ambassadorial meetings are planned in Brussels. Czech ministers will chair fifty meetings with their counterparts from EU countries. More than 320 political events will take place in Czechia.

Among the most important of these are 14 informal ministerial Councils and an informal summit of Heads of States and Governments in Prague. Informal Councils will reflect the priorities of CZ PRES and will be held in the Prague Congress Centre to ensure maximum safety of their participants.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 2.9283 | EURO - 3.0504 | GBP - 3.5503 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 5.4223 | SWISS FRANC - 3.0522 |

UK Allocates Georgia More Than £5 Million to Protect Against Russian Cyberattacks

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced at the NATO Madrid Summit on Wednesday that the UK would allocate Georgia more than £5 million of additional funding to protect against Russian cyberattacks. The financial aid that marks the next phase of UK cyber support for Georgia will allow the Georgian National Security Council to deliver their new cyber security strategy – identifying and repelling attacks from those seeking to undermine both Georgian and European security.

“The people of Georgia live every day on the frontline of Russian aggression. Putin cannot be allowed to use Georgia’s sovereign institutions to sharpen the knife of his cyber capability,” said Prime Minister of England Boris Johnson at the NATO Summit.

The statement on the official website of the British government emphasized that Ukraine and Georgia have experienced the terrible consequences of Russian military aggression, both directly on their territories and indirectly through cyber and other attacks, in the last fifteen years. The statement also focuses on a cyberattack case in 2008, when the world’s first coordinated cyberattacks were used to ‘cripple Georgia’s security architecture while Russia carried out its illegal annexation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia’.

As noted in the statement, the UK



▶ British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

will also work directly with the Georgian Ministry of Defense to bolster its cyber defenses and capability. The UK bilateral support for Georgia’s cyber security will be complemented by an additional package of tailored support from NATO which will be agreed upon by leaders in Madrid, focusing on increased defense training.

As Johnson noted, the UK has world-leading cyber prowess and the announced support will protect not just Georgia, but also the UK and all other free democracies threatened by Russian hostility.

According to the British government, the National Cyber Security Centre has worked closely with its Georgian counterpart since 2018, providing training and support to improve the country’s cyber capability.

Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili wrote on Twitter that Georgia extremely values the £5 million funding from the UK, “to strengthen Georgia’s resilience to external threats in cyberspace by contributing to both Georgian and European security”. As part of the NATO Madrid Summit, PM Garibashvili met with his British counterpart to discuss the strategic partnership and friendly relations between Georgia and the United Kingdom.



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Public Defender Releases Statement on Verbal and Physical Attacks on Home to Europe Rally Representatives

BY MESSENGER STAFF

In response to the physical and verbal assaults on the “Home to Europe” campaign participants, Nino Lomjaria, the Public Defender of Georgia, claims that the assaults foster an intimidating environment and include criminal behavior, which may have a negative impact on the right to assembly and expression and serve to incite aggression and violence in the nation.

“On June 29 and 30, reports have been actively spread on the attempts to disrupt the information campaign of the “Home to Europe” movement at various locations and physical and verbal attacks on its participants. In particular, according to the media, human rights activists, students, and politicians, who meet with the population to spread information about European integration and the peaceful gathering scheduled for July 3, are hin-



dered by aggressive groups mobilized on the ground. One such violent incident took place in one of the buildings of Tbilisi State University.

The Public Defender of Georgia emphasizes that the organization of a

pre-announced peaceful rally and distribution of information cards for this purpose are fully protected by the freedom of assembly and expression, and it is the responsibility of the Government to ensure the realization of the above.

It should be noted that attacks on campaign participants and obstruction of their activities create an intimidating environment and contain elements of crime, which may have a detrimental effect on the freedom of assembly and expression and serve to incite aggression and violence in the country.

Thus, the Public Defender of Georgia calls on the law enforcement agencies, by mobilizing appropriate resources, to facilitate the conduct of information campaigns by the “Home to Europe” movement in a calm and safe environment and to timely prevent violations, criminal acts, and attempts, as well as to launch investigations into offences. At the same time, it is important for the administration of Tbilisi State University to effectively ensure the safety of students by controlling the entry of third parties into the area of the institution and immediately responding to incidents”, reads the statement.

FRIDAY		JULY 1	
Day	Mostly sunny	High: 31°C	
Night	Rain	Low: 19°C	
SATURDAY		JULY 2	
Day	Rain	High: 27°C	
Night	Clear	Low: 18°C	

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43, Chovelidze st., Tbilisi, 0108, Georgia

Founded by Prof. **Zaza Gachechiladze**
Tamar Gachechiladze
 Publisher

Phone: +995 99 56 56 21; +995 77 76 00 00
 E-mail: messenger@messenger.com.ge
<http://www.messenger.com.ge/>

Nino Metreveli
 Commercial Director

Mariam Mchedlidze
 Editor-in-Chief

Nino Kavelashvili
 Design and Layout

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