

## Civil Society Organizations Present a Plan for Georgia's EU Future



By Liza Mchedlidze

Representatives of civil organizations presented a plan regarding the implementation of the 12-point requirements plan presented to Georgia by the European Commission.

Director of Fair Elections, Nino Dolidze, said that the existence of political will is necessary to implement the mentioned plan.

According to her, the plan presented by the government a few days ago on how to get candidate status was only procedural issues and the information about the working groups was disclosed. Also, there were no specific steps mentioned in the statement made by Irakli Kobakhidze.

"We think that this will be another

formal process that will take time, and in the end we will not be able to take the steps that Georgia needs today in 6 months.

That's why we present a plan on what to do to get candidate status.

First, what we see in the recommendations is political polarization. In this regard, we think we should go back to Charles Michel's document, where it was well written that in order to achieve depolarization, power should be distributed and balanced in the Parliament of Georgia - for example, 5 committees should be chaired by the opposition, including 2 such as budgetary ones. It doesn't take much time and is very easy to do. In case of political will, this is easily possible.

Constitutional amendments are also

important, on which 1 hearing has already been held and it needs 2 more hearings to be adopted, this is also easy to do.

In addition, it is very important to change the electoral legislation, which refers to the independence of the CEC, its chairman and professional members based on consensus. This will be the main thing in order to raise public confidence in the elections.

One of the main issues is justice reform, and we have presented a plan on how to implement it.

It is very easy to reform the Supreme Council of Justice or to elect the remaining non-judge members of the Supreme Council of Justice.

We have also presented a vision regarding the fight against corruption - an

agency should be created that will unite the mechanisms of fighting corruption in various agencies and will be more effective.

We have the rest of the vision regarding all the points, which will ultimately lead to the 5th point, which is de-oligarchization, that is, the weakening of the oligarch and his rule. This will not completely end oligarchic rule, but it will weaken it.

Ultimately, according to a specific plan, if there is political will, everything is very easily achievable. This does not require the creation of working groups or prolonging the process, but by taking specific steps, it is possible to implement this plan," stated Nino Dolidze.

### The News in Brief



Prepared by Liza Mchedlidze

#### PM Gharibashvili Wanted Me to Resign, Says Former Ambassador to France Tea Katukia

The former ambassador of Georgia to France, Tea Katukia, says that her resignation "was solely the wish of Irakli Gharibashvili" and that she was told about it in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "in a very short telephone conversation."

"Two months ago, during a very short

telephone conversation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was clearly explained to me that the expectation of me to leave the function of ambassador represented only the wish of the Prime Minister of Georgia," says Tea Katukia.

After Tea Katukia resigned and spoke about the alleged pressure, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that they were "surprised by the slanderous accusations made by her against the agency." The agency stated that "the ambassador resigned based on a preliminary consultation with her, during which it was

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# What Does the Government of Georgia Want From NATO?

BY MALKHAZ MATSABERIDZE

Against the background of actual distancing from the European Union and broken relations, Prime Minister of Georgia Irakli Gharibashvili took part in the NATO summit in Madrid. However, with the statement made before the summit, he questioned the prospect of Georgia joining NATO.

On June 28-30, a NATO summit was held in Madrid, in which, in addition to member states, partners also took part. Georgia was among them. The North Atlantic Alliance had to respond to the challenges the world was facing. A large part of these challenges is related to the new geopolitical reality that followed the Russian attack on Ukraine.

It is important for us that the declaration of the Madrid summit and the new strategic plan contain a promise to continue the partnership with Georgia and once again confirm the decision of the 2008 Bucharest summit that the country will become a member of the alliance.

The document emphasizes that the security of countries seeking to join the alliance is intertwined with the security of NATO, and the alliance supports the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of these countries. Georgia is included in the list of countries that the Alliance promises to help in developing capacities, protecting political independence, and building integrity and resilience.

NATO is ready to help, but as experts point out, in such conditions, the activity of the Georgian government is essential,

which should tell them what exactly they need help with. It is clear that against the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war, it is first of all important to increase the country's defense capability. Georgia should be able to resist the aggressor who has occupied a fifth of its territory since the 2008 war.

Before the Madrid summit, Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili, who for a time also headed the Ministry of Defense, said that during the period of the "Georgian Dream" rule, large-scale projects are being implemented to strengthen the Georgian army and bring it closer to NATO standards.

"Together we opened a joint training center with NATO in Krtsanis, and I think the country has done everything to further increase the compatibility of our army with NATO," the Prime Minister noted.

This statement of Gharibashvili was immediately followed by criticism. The reality is quite the opposite. According to the data of international organizations, during the last ten years under the rule of Georgian Dream, the armament of the Georgian army has not changed, the government of "Dream" has purchased only 5 tanks, 2 armored vehicles, and air defense systems to increase the defense capability of the country.

Against the background of these data, President Salome Zurbishvili was right, who stated in 2019: "We have no army, no weapons, and we will not have any."

Experts drew attention to the fact that in the process of rapid

accession of Finland and Sweden to the Alliance, there was no talk of offering them an Accession Action Plan (MAP), which has been the instrument for joining the Alliance since 1999. Previously, it was sometimes noted in Georgia that joining the alliance was possible even without MAP.

The decision of the Madrid summit confirmed this assumption, but how useful such an opportunity is for Georgia is another matter, at least the current government of Georgia does not really think so.

Before the Madrid summit, on June 21, during his speech at the Qatar Economic Forum, Irakli Gharibashvili said that he connected Georgia's NATO membership with the restoration of the country's territorial integrity, that is, with the end of the Russian occupation.

"We are not mimics. We understand that Georgia has problems.

We should solve it first and then become a member of NATO. This is the opinion of our European and NATO partners," said the Prime Minister.

This statement of Gharibashvili was met with great displeasure in the opposition circles, and it was declared "equivalent to capitulation" in relation to Russia. It turned out that Georgia's accession to NATO depends on Russia, which must stop occupying the territory of Georgia, and Putin's Russia is certainly not going to do that.

It is also worth noting that NATO or any of its members have never officially linked Georgia's NATO membership with the restoration of territorial

integrity. The authorities of GD were also reminded that during the last years, the Georgian authorities have not officially and openly made a request to join NATO at a high level in any international format.

What Gharibashvili said in Madrid and what was said to him behind closed doors, we will probably never know. Still, it is

also a fact that the relations between Georgia and NATO are not created by the strong anti-Western rhetoric in official circles, as if the West wants to involve Georgia in a war with Russia, and Georgia refuses to do so. That's why the government could not obtain the status of an EU candidate for Georgia.

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explained to Ms. Thea Katukia that the agency was not satisfied with her activities during her time as ambassador to France." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Tea Katukia failed to properly perform the duties assigned to her. Tea Katukia announced her resignation on July 1 and cited 'pressure' as the reason.

### No Party Should Stand Aside, They Should Unite and Cooperate, Says German Ambassador to Georgia H.E. Hubert Knirsch

German Ambassador to Georgia H.E. Hubert Knirsch told the media in response to a question regarding the 12 points of the European Commission's recommendations and depolarization that he is glad that work has started in Georgia regarding the 12 conditions expressed by the European Union.

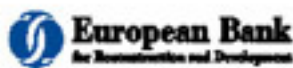
"I am glad that work has started in Georgia regarding the

12 conditions expressed by the European Union. Political forces are thinking how to fulfill them. Also, people are coming to the streets to express their readiness for Georgia to join the European Union."

According to Knirsch, it is important that all political forces that support Georgia's European future, to participate, adding:

"No party should stand aside, they should unite and cooperate. This is what the European Union meant by emphasizing depolarization, which is an important point for Georgia in particular. We know that polarization is a negative characteristic of the Georgian political system. I have been serving in your country for 4 years, and during this period, everyone in Georgia, be it government and opposition representatives, civil society, just the people who live and work here, emphasize how important it is to overcome polarization. The European Union thinks the same. This is an effort that should be implemented by all parties together and at the same time," German ambassador to Georgia said.

## German Development Minister visits Georgia to strengthen German, EU and EBRD support for energy efficiency



On 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, Ms. Svenja Schulze, German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), took part in the signing

ceremony for the funding agreements of the "Open Programme Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings in Georgia".

The funding agreements were signed between KfW, acting on behalf of the German government, and Georgia represented by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure. The agreements unlock EUR 55,85 million for the energy efficient rehabilitation of public build-

ings.

The main objective of the programme is the sustainable, holistic rehabilitation of school buildings to increase energy efficiency and user satisfaction. The project contributes to the improvement of the energy efficiency framework and implementation of the respective EU Directives by applying new energy efficiency standards in a large number of public schools' renovations throughout the en-

tire country.

The renovation measures will lead to optimised energy use and reduced CO2 emissions in targeted buildings. They will further contribute to extending building lifetime and improving health, safety and comfort level. This will help teachers and school children work and study in better conditions.

The project will enhance the market for energy efficiency materials and technologies and support capacity development of the public and private sectors including construction companies. The Project will support Georgia in fulfilling its obligations for a yearly minimum refurbishment

rate of public buildings.

The agreements signed today amount to EUR 55,85 million, of which EUR 43,2 million are provided by Germany, composed of a EUR 40 million KfW concessional loan, EUR 3,2 million grant by the German government for accompanying measures, and EUR 12,65 million grant from the European Union. The programme is co-financed by the Georgian Government and will be implemented by the Municipal Development Fund (MDF) of Georgia.

The Programme is part of the wider joint Team Europe initiative with EBRD and the EU. Earlier this year, an EBRD loan of up to EUR 40 million and a first EU grant of EUR 13 million were launched that will contribute to the implementation of the programme.

### Weather

Monday, July 4

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 27°C

Night Partly Cloudy  
Low: 18°C

Tuesday, July 5

Day Partly Cloudy  
High: 29°C

Night Clear  
Low: 18°C

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*On the occasion to a celebration of the 246<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence and the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the United States and Georgia, the Ambassador of the United States of America H.E. Kelly C. Degnan held a reception on June 30.*

